

The Pastor

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EASTER like no other season in the year tells us of the wretchedness and the dignity of man. In its celebration we have a re-enactment of the grand drama of the Christian life, bringing the message that can transform the old into the new. This is a time when men and women are earnestly seeking to appropriate the New Testament hope, and it is the pastor's supreme opportunity to convey the meaning of eternal life.

If we present the Easter drama well, through sermon and music and Holy Communion, we can prepare our people for the beginning of a new season of evangelism rather than the beginning of an annual slump in our spiritual life. After Easter is too often an anticlimax, a time when we slip back into our old ways of complacency, keeping the machinery of the church grinding away at a low speed and accomplishing little.

In the events of the last days of our Lord's life on earth is revealed to us the meaning of *life, death, and new life* that distinguishes the Christian hope for man from the hopes of all other religions and philosophies. That hope provides the answer to man's fears in today's world of turmoil. Contemplation of the problems we face brings men almost to despair. There is the tension and anxiety presented by the possibility of unlimited war. The problems of hunger and poverty in many parts of the world seem almost without solution. The threat of racial and national conflict makes us fearful of the future. When we look at these problems we find their roots invariably in the fact of human sin. That is the real problem with which the church must grapple, and man's salvation from sin and death is symbolized in Easter.

In the drama we find hope in the midst of our despair. It must be made clear, however, that it is no escapism or sentimentality. It is based upon a realistic view of life upon this earth and its relationship to the Eternal. Into this world of human freedom, sin, and death God sent a Mediator in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. After his walk upon the earth he left his disciples with the conviction that *Jesus is Lord!* His resurrection provides the key to the Christian faith in eternal life. That has been the judgment of the greatest Christian minds, including Paul, Augustine of Hippo, Kierkegaard, and John Wesley.

Three scenes in the Easter drama provide clues as to the meaning of renewal proclaimed in the New Testament gospel. They are symbols of hope that can bring us out of the darkness of turmoil and sorrow and despair and into the light of new life in Christ.

Jesus at prayer in Gethsemane shows how life must be faced as it is. He prayed in anguish, knowing the hardness of men's hearts, and about life's temptations. While Jesus himself was without sin, he makes us who follow him acutely aware of our sinfulness. This scene shows us that no matter to what depths we fall we can come to the Father in repentance and faith and look to him for our salvation. Since all of us have fallen short of the glory of God, we need a quiet place where we can contemplate

the sinfulness of the old man and ask for forgiveness and strength that will make us new.

Golgotha tells us that death is real and that it must be faced by every man. It was on the cross that Jesus died, and that is why the cross is the ultimate symbol of the Christian faith. It is as though it were driven into the earth to remind us of the fact of death. Here, too, we find Jesus in anguish. He was reviled by a thief with whom he was crucified. For a moment he felt that even God had forsaken him. It was grim irony to be put to death by decent, Godfearing people. But death could not conquer.

After it was thought that the cross would bring an end to this strange Galilean, there occurs the third scene in the Easter drama that provides the key to its message. It is the scene on the Emmaus road. There two disciples walked with a Stranger, recounting what they had seen and heard in the days past. So soon after Golgotha these men had become spectators. They remind us of our own weakness. While we profess our Christianity readily enough, we are subdued by choices we must make in our daily life that render our faith a weak and palid thing. But the eyes of these men on the road to Emmaus were opened and they at last recognized that in truth *He lives!* Resurrection had conquered death. With this knowledge they were then ready to become witnesses to their faith.

These scenes in the Easter drama can help us to make very clear the meaning of eternal life. It is not something that begins only after our last day on earth. We do not consider this life unimportant and look forward merely to a soft life after death. We look for a renewal of life that begins in the here and now and reaches into the eternity.

The Christian hope gives life on this earth its highest meaning. The ancient Greeks, with their idea of immortality, looked at the flesh as an evil to be shed at the earliest possible moment. Christian faith does not view the flesh in this manner. It is a part of the Christian hope that men can have the good life on this earth, as well as in heaven. Our Lord prayed that the kingdom would come upon the earth. But man is a responsible creature, and he cannot have the new life in Christ unless he dies to the old life of sin.

The Christian faith, above all other faiths, has the highest respect for the individual personality and its infinite worth in the sight of God. In contrast with the idea that all of us will eventually return to some great Oneness from which we came, is the Christian notion that the individual retains his personality in the sight of God.

We have in the Easter drama the promise of eternal salvation, but it does not present an easy way. It calls for a human response to the divine initiative, and the response must be an active one. Jesus said that *he who believes in me will also do the works that I do*. This calls us to participate as active witnesses and not to sit upon the sidelines as mere spectators to the gospel. In the Easter drama we find the clues to our own life, death, and new life through the redemptive power of Christ.—N.S.C.

The Christian Mission in Africa

FROM the founding of Liberia in 1820 until the present day, American Protestantism has devoted much attention to the task of planting the Christian church in Africa. In the current year the major evangelical bodies in the United States are directing the thought of their people toward the African mission program. Because of the unique situation Africa occupies in today's world, pastors and church leaders should not allow this study to become just another routine "mission study" but it should be presented to the churches as a vital problem, touching all our lives and conditioning our future.

Africa today presents a panorama of complex problems, unsurmounted difficulties, and great opportunities. That Africa is responsive to the Christian gospel is seen in the presence of some twenty-one million Christians in Negro Africa. This is perhaps the largest numerical turning to Christ occurring in any of the major mission fields of the world. Yet no mission group at work in Africa feels that it has done more than merely start the program.

Africa's importance to the Western commercial and military interests lies in her natural resources. A recent pamphlet carries a chart showing Africa's possession of strategic materials in relation to the rest of the world. A goodly proportion of eleven valuable resources is found in Africa.¹

The church must recognize the existence of these materials and the inevitable influence that their presence will have upon the relationship of Africa with the rest of the world. Our main concern with Africa does not

By CHARLES R. BRITT

In Africa, where all life is interwoven with the realm of the spirit, medicine and education and evangelism are providing ways for the message of Christ to take hold in native personality and culture, according to this Methodist missionary. He teaches high school students at the College of West Africa, Monrovia, Liberia.

rest upon this basis, however, but stems from interest in what one missionary has called "the black diamonds," that is, the people of Africa.

It is possible to distinguish several distinct strata of population in Africa below the Sahara today: a vast number of her people continue in the old, tribal societies much as Africa's people lived before the intrusion of the West; a growing group of people sometimes described as "detrribalized" is crowding into the seaports, the mining and industrial centers of Africa, where contact with tribal authority and mores is lost; and there is a much smaller but also increasing group of Africans who are relatively full participants in Western culture.

Alan Paton describes this group thus: "They are doctors, teachers, business men, professors, politicians, priests and ministers, and trained welfare workers. . . . This class of African intellectual is certain to grow. Its members command great respect not only because so many speak such magnificent English but because they have succeeded in the world."²

In South and East Africa we find what the social scientist is now terming a "plural society." By a plural society is meant one in which two or more groups, separated by racial, educational, economic, and social dif-

ferences live within one common political framework. In three territories of East Africa we find the Arabs (perhaps 30,000), Europeans (52,000), Indians (140,000), and 17,500,000 Africans (W. Arthur Lewis and others, *Attitude to Africa*, Penguin Books, 50 cents, p. 47).

In such a "melting pot" (where as yet the elements have refused to melt) there exist great tensions. The pervasive resentment of the dominant by the dominated; the eagerness with which skill-demanding jobs are snatched up by the Indians; the conflicting economic interests of Africans, the peasant producers, and Arabs and Indians as traders; and the political authority of the white minority—all of these complicate life in South and East Africa. In West Africa where climate has in effect, if not in theory, eliminated the possibility of a large, permanent white population, the plural society as such does not exist.

It is into this Africa with its new, Western-created problems of economic, political, and social tensions, and with its continuing traditional problems of ignorance, superstition, and disease that the Christian Church sends its missionaries. The complexity of the church's program is symbolized in the Africa group's request at a recent strategy conference that the Methodist Board of Missions re-

¹ Isaacs, H. R., and Emory Ross, "Africa: New Crises in the Making." Headline Series, No. 91, Foreign Policy Assn., p. 13, 35 cents.

² Paton, Alan, "South Africa Today." Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 175, pp. 22-23, 25 cents.

cruit and send to the field specialists in twenty separate occupations.

The aim of missions as defined in the Methodist Discipline (Par. 1166) arises from a view of the gospel as valid for the whole of life. No lesser concept of the gospel will work in Africa where, as Ina C. Brown has pointed out, "religion is not something separate and apart but is interwoven with the total life" (in "African Religions," *World Outlook*, August, 1952, p. 373).

Belief is basic to all African action. No important enterprise is undertaken without invocation of either the High God or the ancestral spirits. Farming, hunting, blacksmithing, marriage, adolescence, childbirth, and death—the total round of human life for the traditional African is intimately related to the realm of the spirit.

As a consequence, with the traditional African as with other primitive peoples it is true that "bad social conditions are all linked up with their religion."³ In her mission work among the peoples of Africa the church is inexorably forced to be true to her basic purpose of proclaiming that *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself* (2 Cor. 5:19).

Through medicine, which presents a kindly but nonetheless direct attack upon belief in magic, evil spirits, and fatalism, the church witnesses to the redemption of life that comes through the Great Physician. Through education that guides and develops inquiring minds, the church leads thousands of youth to the feet of Him who sat on a mountain and taught. (The Christian churches carry nearly 85 per cent of the total educational load in Africa, according to Emory Ross in *African Heritage*, Friendship Press, \$2, pp. 55-56). Through preaching the church sets forth an orderly account of that which God has done among us.

All of this is evangelism, for the traditional African knows nothing of the dangerous Western heresy of "secular" versus "sacred" areas of human life. "As thou art in church or cell, carry that frame of mind into the marketplace," wrote Meister Eckart for the well-being of Chris-

tians. For many primitive Africans there is, in the sense of which Eckart wrote, no "cell" or "church" or "marketplace." There is only life, and it is all holy.

The Christian mission in Africa then does not work in a cultural vacuum. With our Western tendency to define "civilization" (an overwrought word) in terms of material culture and a bumper crop of gadgets, we are prone to regard the African as uncivilized. Some have even taught the African so to regard himself! This is erroneous. African culture is varied, rich, and complex.

Of the three paths of development open to any people, African societies have taken the path of development of a social culture accompanied by a relatively simple material culture. But in language, kinship systems, systems of education, social control, and oral literature, the culture is rich. Yet each of these remarkable features of African culture suffers from one seriously weakening factor: traditional African culture is nonliterate.

Thus under the impact of a mechanized, thing-centered, competitive civilization like that represented by the colonial governments of Africa, the traditional culture tends to disappear. Into the resultant milieu of disorganization the Christian Church goes with a message of Him who may become the firm foundation for re-

orientation both of African personality and African culture.

The church is variously motivated to this task. Perhaps the best known missionary to Africa is Albert Schweitzer. His motivation is that of the atoning life. He seeks to atone by his own life for the countless wrongs perpetrated against the African by white men through centuries of exploitation. Others (and this group is no small part of the total Christian mission in Africa) are compelled to preach the gospel that immortal souls might be saved from hell. Still others move out seeing that an exploited, increasingly nationalistic Africa is a fertile seedbed for future world crises. Self-protection demands the conversion of Africa to Christ.

But ultimately the motive is that of Christly compassion. The Methodist bishops at the 1952 General Conference said: "No motive for missions is deep enough which does not bring us to share Christ's sufferings for a lost world. It is the love of Christ which must constrain us. No humanitarian impulse goes far enough. No adventurous 'do-goodism' will stand up under the pressure."

In this spirit and in this faith, the Christian missionary would win Africa for Christ today. The American pastor through prayer and knowledge of the task will aid greatly in the attempt to fulfil our calling.

Church Words: How They Grew

Cretin

During the late Middle Ages devotion to the church was at a peak. Among the people of several European nations piety was so general that it was customary to speak of any human as a "Christian." This was so widespread a practice that the term came to be a broad distinction between men and animals.

Certain Swiss dialects transformed the word "Christian" to "Cretin." In Alpine regions where these dialects were spoken, there were large numbers of deformed persons with subnormal intelligence. This was due to the absence of iodine in the drinking water.

British travelers coming into the territory and hearing mental defectives called *crestins* took the word to be a special term for such persons. Abbreviated to *cretin*, the dialect word for "Christian" came to stand for a type of physical and mental defectiveness.

—Webb B. Garrison

Pastors have permission to use this material in sermons and church bulletins.—Ed.

³ *Man's Disorder and God's Design*, Vol. II, p. 179 (Harper & Brothers [four volumes in one], \$5.00).

The Need for Rejuvenated Christianity

By HERBERT A. KECK

Pointing out factors that make Christianity ineffective as a social force, this writer looks to "a creative minority" to awaken churchmen from their lethargy. He is now living in Evanston, Ill., and devoting his efforts to lecturing.

THOUGHTFUL people today pretty generally recognize that contemporary Christianity is in an anemic condition. Confessedly it is not a very challenging affair. It has grown smug and conventional. The same thing has happened to Christianity that happened to other faiths. They began with a creative epoch of great originality and power. They won outstanding initial triumphs. Then the first flush of enthusiasm faded and they settled down to a conventional career, gradually became adulterated, and lost their pristine purity and power.

Primitive Christianity was an adventurous affair. It was out for constructive revolution. The early apostles went everywhere and *turned the world upside down*. Then something happened to take the vigor out of the gospel. It is one of the ironies of history that the church of which Jesus is the head should have become the advocate and example of a static respectability and its clergy the type of all that is conventional.

Two things in particular happened to Christianity down the centuries that robbed it of much of its virility. The first thing was the intellectualizing of the Christian faith. When the gospel came into contact with Greek philosophy, it was forced to define and to defend itself. There followed the creed-making centuries. Gradually there came a shift from an ethical to an intellectual emphasis. Slowly, and by stages, theology came to take the place of life and experience.

Intellectual conformity became more important than moral consecration. That has been the grand heresy of the Christian centuries. The church came to test men by their beliefs, whereas Jesus Christ always tested men by their lives.

The second thing which tended to devalue the gospel was its institu-

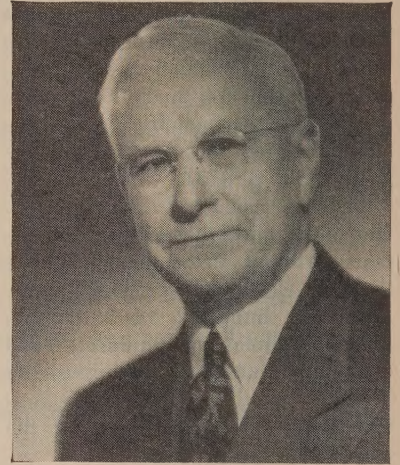
tionalizing. That, to be sure, was not an unmixed evil. For a bodiless Christianity would be just about as effective as a ghost. But great are the perils of institutionalism. This is what usually happens—the idea creates the institution and then the institution smothers the idea. The moment a great ideal becomes embodied it must work under the handicap of its body. This evil we call "ecclesiasticism," and it has been a pest all down the Christian centuries.

Christianity has been far more churchly than it needs to be. Be it remembered that Christianity arose as a protest against institutionalism. Jesus, according to the synoptic record, used the word "church" only twice while he used the phrase "kingdom of God" or "kingdom of Heaven" at least one hundred times.

The result is that today we have a smothered religion. We have an incrustated Christ. We need now to tear away the integuments binding the Son of God. We need to "loose Him and let Him go." Here is the anomalous thing we witness at the present day: a serious loss of interest in organized religion but no abatement of interest in vital religion.

Nowadays when a book appears that presents religion in a fresh and living way, it immediately becomes a "best seller." Nothing but a rejuvenated Christianity can meet the exigent needs of the present hour. People have not lost faith in the Galilean; they have only lost faith in the conventionalized thing that purports to represent him.

Multitudes today pass the house of God, snap their fingers and say it is irrelevant. Whitehead did not exaggerate too much when he said that religion was "tending to degenerate into a decent formula wherewith to embellish a comfortable life" (*Science and the Modern World*, Mac-



millan Co., 1927). We must not be deceived by the fact that church statistics are not too bad. Numbers mean very little in religion. Quality not quantity is the vital matter.

The distressing fact is that the church itself has become a field for evangelism. It may be the church will have to become smaller before her witness to Christ will be more effective. But in spite of widespread disillusionment today there is yearning toward Jesus Christ. What the church needs today is to be driven back to the living roots of the Christian faith. She needs to get back to the spirit and ethics of the Nazarene; back to the fountainhead of the faith. In these days we need to "preach more severely to the church and more pitifully to the world" (P. T. Forsyth).

Several things will contribute to a rejuvenated Christianity. First and foremost, an increased emphasis on Jesus Christ. The Christian religion is Christocentric. It centers not in a church or in a book or in a creed, but in a Person. Christ is not just one element in Christianity; He *is* Christianity. He is what God means by "man" and what man means by "God." He is the perfect mediator bringing God to man in grace and bringing man to God in faith. He holds the decisive place in the ageless relationship between the human and the divine. R. W. Emerson once

remarked, "The church has dwelt with noxious exaggeration about the person of Christ." The sage of Concord with all his erudition seems never to have grasped the real genius of evangelical Christianity. The Eternal Christ was incarnate in the historic Jesus.

The most significant sayings in the gospels are the "I ams" of Jesus Christ. Small wonder a great theologian remarked: "Jesus knows no more sacred task than to point men to his own person." It takes the supreme person in time to reveal the supreme person beyond time. There is the philosophical justification for emphasis on Jesus Christ. "When you can have fragrance without the flower, when you can have light without the Sun, when you can have heat without fire, then you can have Christianity without Christ."

We cannot err in the direction of thinking too magnificently of the Son of God. He transcends all our human categories. All too often we have placed disproportionate emphasis on church and Bible and creed. These are proper in their place but they are here only as servants of the gospel.

A few years ago a Jewish father, recently converted to Christianity, took his small son to church with him. When the service was over and the tiny lad was outside he said to his father, "Daddy, the man didn't say anything about Jesus Christ." We fear that happens all too often. How often in the diary of John Wesley we come upon the words, "I gave them Christ."

Every great revival in church history began with a fresh emphasis on Jesus Christ. Since the advent of the Son of God to this planet, every really great preacher has grounded his message in Jesus Christ. The preachers of the future who will move mightily upon the conscience and the aspiration of men will move upon them in the everlasting forms of his truth and grace.

A second thing contributive to a revitalized faith will be a greater emphasis on personal experience of Christ's indwelling presence and power. Protestant Christianity has laid stress on justification by faith. The forgiveness of sins is the first thing in Christianity but not the

whole of it. The indwelling Christ is the crown and climax experientially of New Testament teaching. Forgiveness of sins is the vestibule, the indwelling Christ is the house. It takes the indwelling Christ to make a Christian. *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his* (Rom. 8:9b). The Spirit makes Christ contemporary. Calvary and Pentecost are organically related. The work of Christ for us is supplemented by the work of the Spirit in us.

Christianity means two things—the gospel of the Savior's love and the religion of the Spirit and of power. We are prone to accept the first, while we remain strangers to the religion of the Spirit and of power. We believe in the Spirit in principle but not in any practical fashion. The church is full of people who are strangers to the deeper movements of the Spirit of God. They do not really expect their religion to do much for them.

To go to church and to be forever told what we ought to be and what we ought to do gets to be an aggravation. The proper word for the preacher is "How?" We have ethics; we are surfeited with good advice. The deepest need of human nature is a dynamic which will enable us to bring practice up to the level of knowledge.

The power that is to purify feeling, set higher standards in conscience, reconstruct character, remove moral infirmity, inform life with significance and hope is the force of the Spirit of God working on the human spirit. It is beginning to dawn upon us that Christianity properly understood is the religion of the Spirit. It is a singular fact that the Quakers alone among religious groups have laid continuous and almost exclusive emphasis upon the Spirit, and it is the Quakers whose religious stock today stands away above par. They are universally respected. They are numerically small and yet they exercise an influence altogether out of proportion to their numbers.

Current religion lacks soul. Multitudes in the modern church must needs confess like those Ephesian believers: *We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.* Much contemporary Christianity goes

little beyond Unitarian religion. It makes much of Christ the teacher and Christ the exemplar but is silent regarding the indwelling Christ. It exploits the social gospel—we do need social reconstruction, but we need redemption even more.

Until there is a new spirit in the hearts of men we cannot make our social schemes operative. Not much is to be expected from changed systems operated by unchanged men. It is a tragedy that instruction concerning the Spirit has passed out of the orthodox churches into the cults. There it is associated with glossolalia and a rampant emotionalism. The consequence is the spiritual impoverishment of the churches. The prophetic word still stands: *Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts* (Zech. 4:6).

There is little in the gospel record to indicate the power of Jesus Christ to transform human lives during his earthly ministry. The people as a whole were mainly interested in the "signs" and objective cures and did not seem to get beyond them. It required the climactic events of our Lord's death and resurrection to convince men and women on any scale. Then came Pentecost and the church under the afflatus going forth conquering and to conquer. It was Pentecost that put the radiance into primitive Christianity, and be it remembered, Pentecost is not so much an event as it is a continuous principle in the life of the Christian Church.

There is nothing more needed today than a breath of the Holy Ghost. Until we are Spirit-inhabited, Spirit-motivated, and Spirit-empowered men and women, there will be no rejuvenescence of the Christian faith.

A third thing contributive to a revitalized Christianity is greater emphasis on making the spirit of Christ regnant in life in all its ranges. The gospel has social implications. Religion is personal but it is never merely personal. It has a horizontal as well as a vertical relationship, though the two are organically related. All social realms are to be brought under the law of Christ.

The gospel never sanctifies the *status quo*. It seeks to transform the world as it is into the world as it ought to be. Individuals are trans-

formed by the grace of God so that they in turn may be transformers of the social order. If we are to vitalize the Christian faith, we must cease giving lip-service to the brotherhood of man and begin making it dynamic and operative.

Everybody believes in brotherhood in principle, it is when it comes to the practical application that the shoe pinches and we draw back. What is needed today is a more heroic and sacrificial practice of the gospel. The modern world manifests no particular hostility to the Christian faith. It has a great desire to see the thing at work. The test of our faith now is not, "Is it credible?" but, "Is it practicable?"

These are crucial days. God is speaking to us in events. It is no time to "prophesy smooth things." The judgment of God is upon us. It is easy to denounce Communism, but it may properly be regarded as the nemesis of the profit economy and the exploitation through four hundred years of the backward peoples of the earth. We are suffering now for the sins of other days.

Since the Renaissance our Western philosophy has been increasingly individualistic. Now the pendulum is swinging in the opposite direction toward collectivism. Today mere individualism is passé. An extreme individualism has produced an atomistic society. The need now is for a more organic order of life. We must not forget that the totalitarian state is the mistaken expression of something. It represents the hunger of helpless and hopeless human beings for a more solidaristic society. That lesson ought not to be wasted upon us.

Democracy is challenged today by a relentless foe. It is easy to tell men not to sell their freedom for a mess of pottage. But political democracy is a pretty empty thing unless supplemented by at least a proximate social and industrial democracy. To Christianize anything means to democratize that thing, to put the family spirit into it. It is written in the stars that democracy is to complete itself. No doubt wisdom here would indicate the middle way combining free enterprise with that measure of social central requisite to the public weal.

We are witnessing today around

the world the revolt of the masses. The underlings are on the march. In this day of social awakening will the church maintain a craven silence? Will she be found on the side of privilege or on the side of the people? This is the day of all days for the church to voice the demands of social justice; to say bluntly, "Stop mopping up the flood and begin turning off the spigot!" Philanthropy is good and will always be needed, but philanthropy must be supplemented by social politics. Let us not forget the terrible nemesis visited upon the Orthodox Church in Russia because for generations she was the tool of the czarish regime, exploiting the people rather than seeking to enrich them.

All men who care for the faith must recognize that these are critical days for the Christian Church. But the church is neither dead nor dying. The glorious thing about Christian faith is that we can never tell what it will do next. Just when everything seems moribund, there comes a religious awakening and often in the most unlikely places. Church history is punctuated with those periodic rejuvenations which come from time to time. The Reformation was a throw-back to primitive Christianity. The Wesleyan Revival was another such renewal. So the Great Awakening in New England. And now once again our faith needs to awaken from lethargy, throw off the incrustations of the centuries and go forth to fresh conquests in the heroic and sacrificial spirit of Jesus Christ.

Renewal will come through a minority. The world has always been saved by minorities. Even at this hour authentic Christianity is represented by a minority, and that is true even in lands traditionally represented as Christian. A creative minority can change the atmosphere of any church. *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump* (Gal. 5:9).

It is our faith that if Christianity as we know it were to "go to pot" that would only mean that the spirit of Christ would reclothe itself, perhaps in finer and more effective forms than those under which it now operates. The imperative need of this hour is repentance; our hope as in other days lies in the remnant.

By

ARTHUR W. PRESTON

AFTER a visit of three months in the United States during which time I have preached at Sunday worship services, addressed ministers' and students' groups, preached at annual conferences, and conferred with church leaders, I submit some impressions of American Methodism. This full program has taken me to most of the Eastern states, the Midwest, a portion of the South, the Southwest, and Far West.

I found striking similarities between Americans and Australians. In fact, I would go so far as to say that no two peoples on earth have so much in common. Each firmly believes in the democratic way of life.

The informality in social relationships, to which I am accustomed in my homeland, I found to an even greater degree in America. My earliest and abiding impression was of the warmhearted friendliness and overflowing generosity of my fellow Methodists. Time and again I was taken immediately into the circle of friendship.

I found the youth of your churches clean, wholesome, vital youngsters, full of the joy of living and seeking to build a full-rounded, healthy Christian life. If I may pass one comment, which is not intended to be critical, I would say that children and young people in the United States appear to take on the manner and habits of adulthood a few years earlier than they do in Australia.

It is beyond question that church attendance in the U.S.A. is better than in any country on earth. This judgment is not based only upon observations in the stronger churches. It is true that over 50 per cent of Methodist membership does not regularly attend public worship, but even taking that into account, the church-going habit is more widespread in America than elsewhere. It has been good to see so many husbands accompanying their wives to worship. The practice of having adult classes in Sunday schools was something new to me, and I consider it a most commendable feature. I did find, how-

Impressions of American Methodism

Surprised by some features of The Methodist Church in the United States and gratified by others, this minister and evangelist of Brisbane, Australia, discloses his impressions after a recent three-months visit in this country.

ever, that in some places many adults make it a substitute for worship.

I was disappointed to find so few churches with an evening service of worship. Most churches have a youth program on Sunday nights, but usually there is no provision for adults. I found also that Sunday is not observed with the same strictness as it is in my country. (I am referring only to the attitude of active church members.)

In Australia it would be unthinkable to have a church picnic on a Sunday afternoon or to play parlor games in the church hall on Sunday nights. Again, I wish it to be understood that this comment is not intended to be condemnatory but merely illustrating a point of difference. It could be that we Australians are too conservative and it could be that at this point American Methodists are too liberal. It is something we each should consider and then act accordingly.

The idea of midweek family dinners with a devotional program is an excellent one. I think the association of eating with fellowship is a sound method.

I have also been impressed by the active participation of lay people in the local church program. The Fisherman's Club with its program of visitation evangelism is nearer to the heart of real Christianity than any other activity of the Christian Church. The leadership being given by the General Board of Lay Activities is most effective. I can see also that the local church lay leader can be a very valuable office when fully exploited.

Like a glittering diamond among the gems of lay workers is the Woman's Society of Christian Service. The nation-wide co-ordination of women's work is something we might well emulate in Australia. The idea of

"circles" operating as subsidiary agents of the main women's group was also new to me, and is worthy of emulation in other lands.

A visitor from any other section of World Methodism must always be impressed by the fine church properties, with commodious and well-equipped educational buildings. He will also be staggered by the huge financial budgets and, if he is a minister, he will be envious of the additional staff engaged by many churches. Such a visitor feels like a poor child visiting his rich relations.

The national organization of American Methodism is an impressive feature. I was able to visit the departmental buildings in New York, Chicago, and Nashville and met most of the directors of these departments. At times I was somewhat bewildered by the extent of the fields of specialization, but I can see that in a church whose membership is as great as the total population of Australia, and a rapidly growing church at that, the emergence and expansion of these departments is both inevitable and essential.

I was greatly impressed by what is being accomplished through *The Upper Room* and the Board of Evangelism, and particularly by the prayerful and dedicated spirit in which their officers carry out their duties.

I like the episcopal system, with the bishops and district superintendents, but I prefer the Australian and British method of making appointments through a committee comprised of an equal number of laymen and ministers.

An Australian Methodist is immediately aware of the difference in the interior arrangement of the sanctuary with divided chancel, altar, cross, and candles. As one who firmly

holds to the Protestant tradition of the proclamation of the Word of God through preaching and who is first and foremost an evangelist, I want to say I am absolutely won over to this method of church furnishings.

My own experience has been that it has in no way detracted from the preaching office, nor from the evangelistic presentation of the message. Indeed I found this focusing of worship through the central altar and cross to be most helpful to worship.

The average order of worship is also to be commended and it is pleasing to note that the liturgy is not overdone. I must confess, however, that I was disappointed at the infrequency of the celebration of Holy Communion in most churches. This is difficult to understand when it happens within the framework of an episcopal church.

In the matter of interracial relationships I am proud of the lead American Methodism is giving. I shall always remember with pleasure my visit to the Church of All Nations in New York and in Boston. What a memorable experience it was also to preach to a congregation of Negro Methodists in Wilmington, Delaware, and to visit Bennett College for Negro girls in Greensboro, North Carolina, and to talk with Dr. David Jones, the president.

I owe a debt of gratitude to scores of ministers and laymen throughout the country who surrounded me with such kindness and brotherly goodwill. They will never be forgotten.

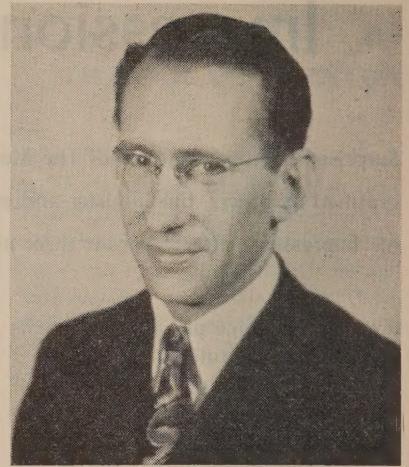
I return to Australia having learned much that will be of value to Methodism "down under," with a large place in my affections for my brethren in the American Methodist ministry and for the people to whom I have been privileged to preach and in whose homes I have experienced Methodist fellowship at its best.

I give thanks to God for Methodism's world parish and pray that through her witness the Universal Church will be enriched and the kingdom of God ushered into power.

Robertson Speaks Today

By PAUL K. McAFEE

Although he labored often under severe physical pain, Frederick W. Robertson preached sermons, more than a hundred years ago, having a vitality that speaks to our own day, writes the pastor of Michigantown (Ind.) Methodist Church.



ONE hundred years ago out of Brighton, England, rose the clear voice of Frederick W. Robertson. He did not become well known beyond his own parish; only one or two of his sermons were published during his lifetime. Yet his sermons have influenced five generations of preachers and his preaching has made an unmistakable mark upon the history of preaching.

As a minister Robertson showed little of the conventionalities of the preacher. In his sermons can be found not necessarily the theology of the schools that he attended, but the religion of his own experience as a student of the Bible, and as one who understood the foibles of man and the strangeness of the human heart.

He was ill much of the time and twice took long walking trips into Europe, going into Germany and Switzerland. Even these trips, however, did not relieve the pressures, and the last time he came home he was no better than when he left. There was a progressive disease of the brain which, during the last year of his life, kept him in constant pain. Yet he labored on until the last week of his life.

His sermons may now be had in a complete volume (*Sermons*, Harper & Brothers, \$1.95). Many of them are famous. What preacher has not read "The Loneliness of Christ," or "Jacob's Wrestling," or "Christian Progress by Oblivion of the Past." These are great among the greatest of sermons.

"The Doubt of Thomas" is a wonderful sermon on the resurrection. Thomas was an honest doubter. Men today have bases for honest doubts

—providing they are honest enough to admit enlightenment of their doubts if enlightenment comes.

"To believe, not because we are learned and can prove," says Robertson, "but because there is a something in us, even God's own Spirit, which makes us feel Light as light, and Truth as true—that is the blessed faith."¹ Blessed, he says, because it carries the spiritual elevation of the character.

Here in this sermon is a message to the young men entering the seminaries to train for the ministry. I have seen young men who were building all their beliefs upon what they learned about Christ, and not what was felt or trusted personally in Him. A preacher must be trained adequately to meet the demands of his parish. He must continue to have his mind open to learn and grow—but he must have a personal touch with Christ, a knowledge of trust and faith in Him, or his ministry will be a burden and his message dead words issuing from a lifetime initiative.

Robertson was a technician when it came to writing his sermons. He spoke extemporaneously much of the time with only the aid of a few sentences on a small slip of paper. For ground work in the preparation for the sermon, Robertson read deeply and widely.

Most of his preaching was expository. "In six years of expository lectures he covered First and Second Samuel, Acts, Genesis, and Corinthians—that, and nothing more! He worked through a book, chapter by

chapter, week by week."² As you read his sermons you find that he preached positively and never negatively.

He preached suggestively, rather than exhaustively or dogmatically. His religion was practical and he put church doctrine to work. He operated upon the assumption that his listeners brought their brains as well as their hearts to the house of God on the Sabbath.

Robertson did not pad his sermons to fill out time. Rather, he did not have time to say all he wished to say concerning his chosen subject. He handled large themes such as Providence, Election, Sanctification, and the Church. Every sermon embodied practical thinking and sane advice. Robertson began on Monday thinking of his sermons for the following Sunday.

The preaching of Robertson can still be an important factor in the world, for his words are as fresh today as they were when spoken and written. Preachers can read his work and gain new insights. Now and then it would not be too great a sin for the larger part of one of his important sermons to be given *in toto* to a congregation—at least, his ideas might very well be studied and used.

Robertson's sermons are clear, concise, wholesome, and vigorous for the most part. For the preacher of today there could be nothing finer than to be required to read Robertson's sermons and read his life. It would show a preacher his shortcomings, compared with the work of a young man,

¹ Frederick W. Robertson, *Sermons* (Harper & Brothers), p. 425.

² James R. Blackwood, *The Soul of Frederick W. Robertson* (Harper & Brothers, 1947), p. 103.

who at the age of thirty-six had not yet attained the maturity of mind and spirit.

Robertson's greatest inspiration is his fearless and honest facing of the new challenges to traditional Chris-

tian dogma that were just then coming from biblical criticism, social revolt, and scientific world view. He was perhaps the first preacher to face these attacks and work through them to a constructive and positive faith.

To read the life of this man and to search his sermons means to feel the thrilling impact of a new voice. The Robertson of a hundred years ago can be, through study, a Robertson for today.

Being Honest with the Text

By JOHN ROBERT VAN PELT

Divine inspiration is not a substitute for study when the preacher searches for the meaning of his text, says this professor emeritus of Gammon Theological Seminary. His second article on pulpit exegesis will be presented next month.

AUGUST Tholuck, famous professor of theology in Halle from 1826 to 1877, while not one of the greatest theologians of his time, probably surpassed all his colleagues in the strength and depth of his spiritual influence. He was one of the most impressive preachers of the century. Concerning his homiletical practice he once said that he never undertook to preach from any passage without kneeling and asking God to show him "the little door into the heart of the text."

Doubtless we are all agreed that the pulpit is not the place for the refinements of formal exegesis. These belong to the preacher's study and the professor's lecture-room. Yet the pulpit, being set as it is for the proclamation and exposition of the gospel in its fulness and purity, is after all the supreme place for the effectual interpretation of the word.

The pulpit stands, as "the living voice of the gospel," for the clear setting forth of the very essence of the everlasting gospel in the fresh light of each new day. Since the church's sure knowledge of that gospel comes by her holding fast to the testimony of the apostles and prophets, it is necessary that her preachers should know the scriptures.

They must know the heart of the scriptures, for that is what they have to preach. Most believers gained their first knowledge of the love and grace of God in Christ in the home and the church school. But he who dares stand forth as teacher and guide for the great congregation must have studied and must evermore continue

to study to show himself approved.

The faithful preacher dares not despise the careful study of the outward and formal aspects of the Bible. He does not fancy that a divine inspiration lifts him above the necessity of slow and toilsome study.

No doubt the true prophets of the olden time received their illumination from the spirit of God; but the heavenly light did not fall upon the willfully blind. It came only where there was an earnest longing for the light. Today the humble disciple of Jesus realizes that the careful noting of that which is written is a necessary part of the way into the heart of the Bible: *first . . . that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.*

The proposition seems axiomatic that the very taking of a text is a virtual pledge that it shall be handled fairly and understandingly. Even if one should take a text in order to confute it, he is bound at any rate to let its original meaning appear. A young preacher handling the passage about Martha and Mary frankly dissented from the view of Jesus. It was Martha rather than Mary, he said, who chose the better part. "It is more Marthas that we need!" But, with all that, he was not guilty of misconstruing the text.

We hear much about the "various interpretations" of a passage. This is a deplorable misconception of the term. Strictly speaking, a bit of rational speech, oral or written, can have but one actual interpretation. That, of course, is the apprehension of its true meaning. All else is mis-



conception, not interpretation at all. In the Bible there are passages where absolute certainty of interpretation seems unattainable, but at any rate all playing fast-and-loose with texts is of the Evil One.

No doubt many sermons essentially Christian in content have been linked with a misread text. This incongruity has been possible because the ill-instructed preacher was able to draw upon his general store of knowledge of the gospel, and this was not annulled by his mistake.

Such an error, nevertheless, not only mars the beauty of the sermon but also causes confusion in the minds of the hearers. No man, moreover, who stands forth as teacher and guide of the people can be held blameless who lightly spares himself the pains of making sure of the sense of that which he pretends to expound.

One might bring forward a long list of abuses of texts on the part of preachers, but the public scourging of offenders is far less edifying than the exhibiting of shining examples of that which is good and right. Therefore, our citations of abuses shall be few so that we may fix our eyes chiefly upon that which is good.

Our censures might range all the way from that which is least disturb-

ing to that which is most deadly. We might begin with instances of a fantastic or trifling handling of texts where no finger is laid injuriously upon any tenet of the faith. From such we might pass on to instances of preachers' inexcusable ignorance of the real meaning of a passage. And so we might proceed until we come to cases of a wilful wresting of scripture. Instances that seem to fall in the last category will be omitted.

As for instances in the first category, we might make merry over Lorenzo Dow's famous harangue: "Top-knot, Come Down" (Matt. 24: 17). We might be inclined to say to ourselves that the very grotesqueness of the thing renders it harmless. But can such trifling ever be quite harmless? Does it not embolden those whose conscience is weak to venture upon like waywardness?

One may never be able to match Lorenzo Dow's masterpiece, but one is tempted to take a fling. I confess that I was distressed when some years ago the eminent editor of a church paper gave his readers a long series of recollections from many quarters under the caption: "The Strangest Text I Ever Used." If any of us ever chose a text for the sake of its queer-ness, should he not repent in sackcloth and ashes?

Sermons preached from misread texts are far too frequent, and the misreading is generally inexcusable. The way to the right understanding is open. If a preacher of long experience, having for his text Romans 12:1, takes the words *which is your reasonable service* (K.J.V.) as if they meant "no more than God may reasonably require of you," his error is both blameworthy and harmful. Blameworthy, because the right understanding is easily accessible; harmful, because it involves a serious misconception of the life of faith.

When a gifted young preacher, speaking from Matt. 6:22, 23, represents the *single eye* as meaning "an eye single to the glory of God," the misreading of the text seems peculiarly unhappy. The preacher is still able to impart some noble thoughts gained from other sources, but his sermon had nothing to do with his text. A revered minister of long experience, preaching on "A New

Heaven and a New Earth," calmly tells us: "That is to say: 'new thoughts of God and new thoughts of man.'" Obviously, the original meaning is here utterly disregarded.

There have been cases where the misreading of a text has led to serious misconceptions of the nature of the faith itself. A frequent mishandling of the words . . . *we are laborers together with God* . . . (1 Cor. 3:9) illustrates the point. Some preachers are unwearied in telling us that "We are in partnership with God," sometimes going so far as to say: "God needs us as much as we need him." All this they fancy that they find confirmed by the text as cited above.

But the words as found in the Authorized Version are a notorious mistranslation. Happily, all modern versions correct the error. Rightly understood, the rendering might be about as follows: "We [that is, Paul, Apollos, Peter] are co-workers belonging to God [or, in God's service]; you are God's field for tilling, you are God's house to be built."

No doubt, all true children of God are in a most real sense in partnership with him, but certainly not as though we supply any part of the capital. "It is all of God." It is our glorious privilege, using the grace which he gives, to labor, and labor fruitfully, in his vineyard; of ourselves we can do nothing.

But I refrain from multiplying examples of evil practices. Let us turn our eyes to more pleasant prospects.

A general survey of the history of the Bible in Christian preaching would be of great value. Hitherto, however, no systematic study in this field has been carried out, although Martin Kaehler, in his *Geschichte der Bibel in seiner Wirkung auf die Kirche* (untranslated), has pointed the way and made significant contributions toward the accomplishment of the task.

From the very beginning it has been an undisputed axiom in the Church Universal that to be and remain truly Christian she must be truly apostolic. The gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is no invention of ours. It came to us by the word of our Lord's apostles and evangelists. And the church well knows that her preaching must ever

be in substance the continuation of the gospel first proclaimed by the Lord himself and confirmed unto us by those who heard him.

Yet for the first twelve centuries of the church's history of the taking of a text for preaching was not customary. In the last centuries before the Reformation, however, the practice became rather general. At length, in the churches of the Reformation the greatest stress was laid upon the importance of the specific basing of our preaching upon the written word.

During those first twelve centuries a general confidence in the soundness of church tradition prevailed. The preaching was believed to have shown itself apostolic by its faithfulness to church tradition. The Reformers, on the other hand, felt themselves bound to deny the inerrancy of church tradition. Popes had erred and councils had erred. They appealed, therefore, to the changeless tradition of the New Testament. In Protestantism in general the insistence upon preaching from a text was designed to serve as a safeguard against error.

Negro Rural Work

"If a pastor wants to stay a long time in the same church, he must study more," said Silas Long, who has been pastor of the Oak Grove Church west of Jackson, Tennessee, for twenty-four years.

"The families I have helped the most," he explains, "are those whom I have served at least eight or ten years."

In a recent study made by the Rural Church Department of Drew Seminary, of twenty-one successful Negro rural pastors, it was found that the average length of service in their present churches has been seventeen years. This report is entitled *Go Down, Moses* and seeks to point the way for the future of Negro rural work. It is being distributed at just the cost of printing (40 cents).

—From the Rural Church Department, Drew Seminary, Madison, New Jersey.

Letter from a British Pastor

By JOHN BISHOP

(This writer is pastor of the Methodist Church, Stockport, Cheshire, England.)

WHATEVER may be the future of the Methodist Campaign for Advance to which Britain, in common with the rest of world-wide Methodism, is committed in 1953, there can be no question that it got off to a magnificent start.

On the first Sunday evening in the new year, W. E. Sangster, who is joint secretary for the campaign with Colin Roberts, this year's president of the Conference, preached a sermon on "What a Religious Revival Would Mean to Britain" in the Central Hall, Westminster, to a crowded congregation.

The next day every national newspaper made the sermon a leading feature. This has never happened before within the memory of most of us. Your readers will be interested in the ten points which were made in the sermon, ten benefits that would result from a revival.

1. It would pay old debts.
2. It would reduce sexual immorality.
3. It would disinfect the theatre.
4. It would cut the divorce rate.
5. It would reduce juvenile crime.
6. It would lessen the prison population.
7. It would improve the quality and increase the output of work.
8. It would restore to the nation a sense of high destiny.
9. It would make us invincible in the war of ideas.
10. It would give happiness and peace to the people.

In another sphere there has been a recent Methodist success. The British Broadcasting Corporation not long ago introduced Donald O. Soper, the president-elect, into "News Conference," a television feature previously reserved entirely for politicians. He had a triumph. His cogently presented arguments made a great impression.

The president of the Conference,

who journeys all over the country during his year of office, ceaselessly preaching and speaking and holding conferences with ministers and lay officials, said recently "I am convinced of a quickening and an eager expectancy. We are recovering something vital in our church life. Our people are answering the call to prayer, and I believe we are on the threshold of great things." Arrangements are being made for all the students in our theological colleges to spend their Easter vacation in campaigns.

Many cinemas in various parts of the country have been made available for film services on the evening of Good Friday. The mobile daylight cinema vans are being allotted to cover all the forty-six districts of British Methodism. A letter is being sent to every scholar resident in Methodist schools and to each Methodist student in the universities.

I would like to tell your readers what we are doing in this particular area where I am. We have just held a most successful Methodist exhibition in Stockport, designed by one of our ministers who has considerable artistic gifts. It is divided into four parts, under the general title "What Is The Methodist Church?" It is designed to show what our church says on great social and religious questions, what it does at home and overseas, what it believes, and what it wants.

A special place of honour was given in the exhibition to the work of The Methodist Church in the United States, illustrated by photographs, maps, posters, and booklets generously supplied through the good offices of Elmer T. Clark. We are very grateful for the wealth of material which has poured in as a response to our request, and it has given our people here some idea of the vast resources of their fellow Methodists in America.

We also exhibited some Wesley relics, letters written by John and Charles, three locks of John's hair,

and a number of valuable busts of Wesley loaned by J. E. Eagles, principal of Cliff College, who has a unique collection of such objects, valued at £2,000.

In addition to the exhibition, which was shown in three different churches in Stockport and is to go on tour round the district, a play was presented entitled "The Late Mr. Wesley," by F. H. Everson. The J. Arthur Rank film, made for 1953 and entitled "The Promise," dealing with the gift of the Holy Spirit, was shown. This film has been given by Mr. Rank to the Home Mission Department, and copies of it are being shown all over the country.

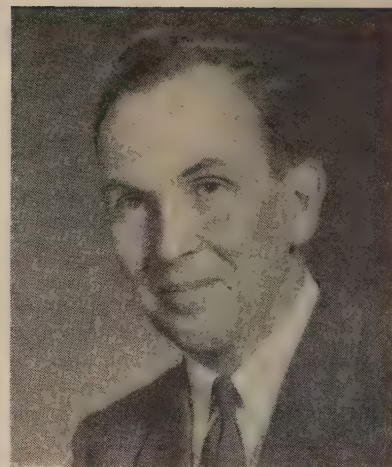
As a part of their evangelical effort during this year, many churches are arranging factory visits and services. This means that the witness of the gospel is being taken into one of the widest constituencies and to people who would otherwise never hear the challenge.

Experiments are being made in team preaching, so that some consecutive teaching might be given from our pulpits on what a Christian believes and why. In one of my own churches a request has come that we might have a refresher course in church membership. Many of the older members came into the church without any course of preparation, and others have joined us from other denominations and do not really know what Methodism means.

So I have planned a week-end course as follows. We begin on Saturday afternoon with an address on "Methodism, Its Theory and Practice," followed by group discussion. Then after tea a second address will be given on "Methodism, Its Discipline and Duties," which also will be discussed in small groups and the findings reported to the whole company. On Sunday morning the theme will be "Methodist Worship," and the full Office of Holy Communion will be used in place of the ordinary service. In the evening we shall consider the distinctive Methodist beliefs, and the course will end on Monday evening with an address on Methodism and its mission today, in the world and in the individual, followed by an open conference in which any questions may be asked.

Developing a Complete Family Life Program

By **JOHN D. ROZERBOOM**



No single emphasis will prove more useful to the church than the development of a complete family life program, writes the pastor of Trinity Methodist Church, Highland Park, Mich., a member of the National Council on Family Relations.

THE CHURCH is essentially a family of believers. It is a true brotherhood. It is a fellowship. No single emphasis will prove more useful to the individual church than a rich and full family life program. Nothing the church does will be more helpful to the individual members.

The development of a family life program takes time and effort. It takes study and constant adaptation. No two churches have the same needs or the same ways of meeting needs. We must be sure to recognize this, or our programs and our plans will become dictatorial and institutionalized.

An integrated program of family life can only be achieved by having a functioning family life committee, made up of those who can bring the total church feeling to a focal point and can develop it into a program.

This committee should probably be made up of the pastor, the church school superintendent, the president of the W. S. C. S. and representatives of various adult groups in the church. It should also include youth members and representation from the men in the church. It needs representatives of the mission board and the community service group, as well as a person from the social action group of the church. A sympathetic doctor or lawyer, as well as a few other interested persons, might be added. As a committee it can be set under the official board in the commission on education, with representative members elected by their own groups.

Its responsibility should be the creation and supervision, in an advisory capacity, of an adequate family

life program for the total church. This cannot be accomplished overnight, nor perhaps for several years. But the goal should never be lowered, and the methods should be subject to constant evaluation and improvement.

The first task of the committee is to evaluate the program of the church as it now stands. How much of that program is now actually in the area of family life? What are the specific things desired in this particular church? What plans shall we make to achieve them? What methods shall we use to keep our program up-to-date? What precautions shall we take to keep it from becoming trite and institutional? How adequate is our present educational program? What groups of people are we missing? The list of questions is endless.

Be honest in this evaluation. Be thorough and complete. Ask for help from the conference executive secretary, or the chairman of a district or conference family life committee. If you wish, use a blank or combination of blanks in some of the family life texts available or the one developed by the Department of the Christian Family of the Methodist Board of Education.¹

After an honest evaluation of the present program, the committee is ready to move with a program specialized and co-ordinated with the over-all plan, and to be instigated as rapidly as possible.

No phase of the program of the church may be regarded as illegiti-

mate part of the family life program. From the baptismal font to the cemetery; from the home calls of the pastor to the sanctuary worship service; from the annual pledge to the outreach of the last missionary dollar, the church should be family centered.

The educational plan of the church must be the strong right arm of the family in its religious teaching. Christian homes must become the center of Christian churches. When this happens, then we may say that the church is a true family of believers.

Before a good program of family life education can be developed, the whole church must be ready for it. It is not enough to have a few members on a committee making suggestions for a program. The total church must feel a deep need for the program, and must express a great desire for it. The need is there; the task is to encourage the people to recognize and to state it.

The desire for an adequate family life program can be developed by a period of education and suggestion. A few sermons on the subject, followed by some mention of what other churches are doing, will help. Already existing groups with the beginnings of interest can be encouraged. These efforts could very well be centered at the time of the every member canvass, making it an "every family canvass"; or during the weeks just before or just after the traditional Mother's Day observance. Or perhaps it could be integrated with a church school visitation program in the early fall to enrol new families in the school.

Perhaps the easiest approach to

¹ Edward D. Staples, director, Box 871, Nashville, Tenn.—Ed.

a family life program is directly through the church school. All ages of the family are represented. Here we have evidence of the desire of the parents for better methods and procedures. We may have basic patterns already set, such as department family nights and parent-teacher meetings. If these do not already exist, they can be organized quite easily.

Classes for parents might begin a program of carrying over the children's Sunday school lessons into the weekday life of the home; the enlargement of the basic lesson into an experience can produce spiritual and intellectual growth in the child. Teaching religion is the task of the home. The church school can do some of the teaching, but it cannot do the job the home can do.

The Department of the Christian Family has been developing materials and techniques for co-ordinating the home and the church in the educative process. Material on this may be secured from the department.

The special needs of the various age groups must be taken into account in the educational approach to the family through the church school. The children's material published by The Methodist Church is rich and full of suggestions. This may be put in the hands of parents and into practice in the home. The school can teach new home worship skills to the younger children; it can be ready to guide the child through early social adjustments and through later emotional and spiritual problems. It can make religious holidays meaningful and give religion a quality and dignity that will have a lasting effect on the child.

The youth division presents opportunity to bridge that gap between the growing adolescent and the parent in matters of sincere religious quest—matters of social behavior and of personal conduct. The home relationships sometimes are dictatorial. The church can add its moral judgments to the situation, and if the home and the church can work together with the youth, it can meet the real needs of a young life when those needs are at their most disturbing focus.

Youth fellowship groups and evening meetings may discuss with their leaders many things they will not

discuss in the home. It is vital, however, that the home also enter into the relationship through its church, so that youth may know that there is a relationship of the facts to living within the family. Frequent meetings of youth with their parents in forums and discussions can be helpful. Parents must be restrained, however, from becoming limiting forces in the discussions. Youth are just as apt to be right in discussions as parents.

If our religion is not concerned with the real problems of its young people, youth will not be concerned much with religion. Discussions of courtship, marriage, homemaking, dating, basic sex education, and community problems should be included.

Fellowship among families can provide very real opportunities to experience the best in the family life program. Fellowship suppers are fun. They should have a purpose and reason beyond mere getting together, but they should be informal, and friendly and warm occasions. They give the whole family a chance to be out together, and are little more costly than eating at home.

Department fellowship programs can be more specific and can be built around the needs of the age group and the parents of that group. Thus the kindergarten department fellowship could be exploring the patterns of faith of young children, while a junior department fellowship could be planned around the learning of skills with craft and other materials. The primary department perhaps could have a supper in late November, and move into a co-operative program of working out ways to make Christmas more meaningful in the home. Children and parents can work together on worship materials, tree ornaments, or on many other things. The members of the family of other ages should attend, and a little guidance from the department teachers in the other sections can make the evening a rich experience for them as well. Senior age girls may be used to guide and entertain very small children. Or perhaps some grandmothers can be put to work here—they will love it.

There are many special interest groups. In the completeness of the

coverage of all the needs and interests of the people lies the strength of a family life program. No area should be omitted. No list of special interests in one church can match that in another. Every family life committee must carefully study its own needs and problems. The following is a list of what one church did in one year in attempting to meet the special needs and interests of its families, in addition to its regular broad educational and fellowship programs.

1. A parent's study course—four weeks, meeting two weekday afternoons.

2. A training course for teachers—twenty-four teachers took part in this.

3. A teen-age clinic—a series of parent-youth discussions.

4. A church school Christmas party—instead of just an entertainment, a family-style picnic in the middle of the winter.

5. A year's program for a club of parents of young children on family living—several films, talks on preparation for marriage, and on sex adjustment in marriage, finances.

6. In the young adult fellowship—series of films on marriage, alternating with forums on the subject.

7. W. S. C. S. four week study course—"The Family, Our Christian Concern."

8. Nursery home members—system of visitation, and distribution of materials of help to parents of young children, including *The Christian Home* magazine.

9. Listing of resources for the family, including names of people within the fellowship of the church who are qualified in these following and other fields—marriage counseling, financial counseling; medical, dental, and legal help; counseling in insurance, real estate, employment, vocational guidance, school-home problems, mental health, educational counseling, and a listing of classified opportunities available in the church community.

10. A file of resources for teachers and program chairmen, of all organizations in the church listing books, records, filmstrips, and speakers on family life subjects.

A full and vital family life program in a church will do several things to the church. It will become

a warmer, more interesting institution; it will become more vital in the lives of the families in it; and it will make a difference in its community.

Essentially, there will be a recentering of motives and desires on the family. Every church seeks to be a vital force in its community. No more

sure way exists than to approach the community through the basic community unit, the family. The world is built on families; and the church stands at the unique place of being the most important force in the total life of the family. That is a tremendous responsibility.

was left alone. The baby arrived unattended, and he was strangled to death by the cord which had become wrapped around his neck, and after a terrific struggle.

I will never forget that young man saying to me through his tears, "If I had only stayed with her through it all *like every father ought to do, like I wanted to do, and like she wanted me to do*, this terrible thing would never have happened!" That was only the introduction to a long session of self-reproach for his own failure as a father-to-be.

Quite apart from the above incidents are the insights and conclusions which seem to be emerging from my own pastoral visitation. I make great effort to maintain the policy of calling on every new mother from my congregation as soon as possible after delivery—usually within twenty-four hours. I seem to average about four such calls per month. I prefer to call when the father is present, but this is not always possible.

I find that God is always very near in those hours of wonder and awe, and even the careless are usually spiritually hungry and responsive at that time. In my opinion the pastor who misses this chance neglects one of the most potent opportunities with his most responsive people as well as with the less responsive.

My people seem to appreciate attention at this time very much. At least they say they do both at the time and later, and their increased devotion to the church is unmistakable. Often a mother says to me, "Why don't all ministers call on new mothers? Mrs. — who shared the room with me remarked several times how nice she thought your call and prayer were and she wondered why her minister did not call at that time."

Some mothers never mention their experience in labor and in the delivery room. Well over half of them talk about it quite a bit. A surprising number recount to me a play by play rehearsal of the great drama they have recently experienced. When they want to talk about it, I listen attentively. When more than one mother is present in the room (which is often), the other mother, usually a

The Counselor's Workshop

Should the father be in the delivery room when his wife is having a baby? That is the question discussed here by one writer who thinks he should. Each month this section presents a personal problem involving pastoral counseling.—Ed.

The Question of Father in the Delivery Room

I HAVE never seen the matter of the propriety and desirability of the father's presence in the delivery room discussed in any of the literature I have read in the field of pastoral problems.

While some fathers in the vicinity of where I live do go to the delivery room with their wives, most of them do not. Though a few physicians seem to encourage the practice, or at least not to discourage it, many oppose the practice and some are very clever in finding ways of making even the idea embarrassing to prospective fathers and mothers. In fact, I have known quite a few expectant fathers to drive their wives to the hospital and then return home until notified of the baby's arrival.

Several things have brought this matter sharply to my attention recently.

One thing is the publication of *The Stork and You* (Westminster Press, \$2.00) by Joan Younger. This widely read and discussed book said in part (pp. 92-93):

"But if you're like me, you'll want your husband around [while you are having your baby]. . . .

"My husband is calm where I am flurried, patient where I am impatient, full of strength where I am weak, and wonderful to have around any time, but especially when I'm

having a baby. Some husbands prefer to get out of the way, and some wives prefer that they should. But many husbands want to help, and many more could, if women would make it known that fathers too have an honored place in the maternity hospital. . . .

"Some husbands are a help even in the delivery room. Many women using the Dr. Read method make their husbands a part of their conquering of pain. Others find that the presence of their husbands cuts down on their need of anesthesia. Of course, if your husband shudders at the mere idea, drop the subject. You don't want two babies to worry about. If he is willing but timid, however, encourage him. There is nothing unnatural about his being on hand—after all it isn't too long ago that fathers frequently delivered their own children, and did a mighty fine job of it too, all things considered."

Another thing calling this matter of fathers in the delivery room to public as well as my individual attention is the tragic experience of a young couple who lost their first baby, the boy of their fondest dreams.

The father had been ushered far away, after the local custom, with the understanding that his wife was being moved immediately into the delivery room. The mother, heavily drugged,

complete stranger to me, frequently joins in the conversation eagerly.

While many of the talkative mothers feel they had a pretty rough session, many say that it was not nearly as bad as they had expected, and most of them agree that it was a wonderful experience.

One of the most common ideas for mothers to bring up is that of having their husbands with them. Very frequently they will finally say to me, "If only I could have had Bob with me then it would have been perfect. Can you tell me why doctors and hospitals seem to discourage fathers from coming into the delivery room with their wives? It seems such a shame to send them away just when their wives really need them."

Less frequently a mother says to me, "Bill was such a comfort and strength to me through it all. He came right into the delivery room with me. The fact that he was right there helped me so much, especially when it began to hurt so. And when I saw his wonder and happiness as he looked at our baby right after she was delivered, I knew it had been worth everything I had to go through. I just don't think I could have a baby without him right there."

I know personally at least three couples whose marriage had been falling to pieces for some time that were so drawn together by the experience of going through the birth of their baby together that the people who knew them could scarcely believe it. In all three instances the miracle was permanent.

There are powerful emotions in those dramatic minutes in the delivery room. No man can watch his wife deliver a baby without being stirred to his depths and without having an entirely new appreciation and love for her. Is there something wrong about making use of them?

Now that relatively few mothers are being drugged into unconsciousness for delivery, and many mothers are delivering their babies with little or no anesthesia, the problem is increasingly insistent.

For instance, my wife delivered her last baby in an unbelievably short time and without even an aspirin during her entire labor. She was exhausted for a couple of minutes,

but she was fully conscious throughout, and she talked to me excitedly and lovingly about the baby during the balance of the time she spent in the delivery room.

The only thing that disturbed her was the fact that the doctor would not hold up the baby for her to look at before he cut the cord. She says that will be carefully understood ahead of time if she ever has another one. She ate a hearty supper less than an hour after she came out of the delivery room. It is one of life's treasured memories for both of us.

Strained family relationships and marriages falling to pieces seem to

constitute one of the major problems of our time. All who love the Christ and minister in his Name are constantly alert for ways and means of strengthening marriage ties.

AM I "off the beam," or is there something here of which the Christian Church and ministry needs badly to make a fresh and careful appraisal.

I am wondering whether we have not been overlooking something of tremendous potentiality for good when we ignore, or treat lightly, this matter of the father's presence at the birth of his children.

What do you think about it?

Report Your Pastoral Calls

You are invited to submit reports of your calls for analysis and evaluation. For each one of your reports selected for publication in "The Counselor's Workshop," you will receive a small check.

All real names and material that may tend to identify the case should be changed before submitting your manuscript. Your name will be known only to the Editor, and not to our readers or to our consultants who will comment.

It is requested that each of your manuscripts be prepared according to the following instructions:

1. *Nature of the call:* Indicate the type of call you consider this to be; that is, whether it is a case of bereavement, illness, marital difficulty, etc.

2. *Introductory remarks:* Give a brief description of the parishioner or person counseled and a statement of your knowledge of and relation to the person before you made the call or granted him the interview.

3. *The call:* Give, as you remember it, a verbatim report of the call in the form of dialogue between yourself and the parishioner. Leave a three-inch margin on the left-hand side of each page.

4. *Questions:* Do not give a lengthy evaluation of your own work, but raise questions that come to your mind, and indicate points in this call where you feel you need help.

5. You may report any number of calls desired, but prepare each call separately, as indicated above, except when your report comprises a series of calls on the same individual and dealing with the same problem. Any reader of THE PASTOR may submit his reports of calls for consideration. Those not selected for publication will be returned.—Ed.

How to Revive Sunday Evening

By ROBERT B. ENGLE

Meeting the challenge offered by lack of interest, the pastor of Trinity Methodist Church, Glenville, West Va., has increased attendance at the evening service fivefold. He offers suggestions about the "Sunday evening problem."



ANNUAL conference is over. You face a new congregation. Sunday morning passes in a glorious manner. The congregation is good.

But—that Sunday evening service! Good pews remain vacant. Costly hymnals collect dust. A handful of faithful saints adorn your sanctuary. Your blood pressure rises. Inspiration fails to come. Discouragement penetrates your heart. Your spirit droops.

Most ministers have experienced such feelings about Sunday evening services. Many of us have completely dropped the Sunday evening hour from our church program. We have been too discouraged to continue.

Let us consider the advisability of such action. We know that the more our minds are filled with spiritual truths, the better we can serve our Master. We know that God wants and demands the best we have to offer. We know he would want us to go the "second mile" in that Sunday evening service.

But the old problem is still present. Admitting that it would be according to God's will, we feel it useless to try. Useless? If so, then God has stopped working through us. If we give up in defeat, we deny that our God is able to perform miracles today. To cast aside our Sunday evening service as "impossible" is to violate the truth that through Christ, we can do all things.

From an average evening attendance of twenty-five, our average soared to one hundred and thirty-one—and we have a theatre next door! This is what we did:

Faith. The pastor was first convinced that it was God's will that our sanctuary be filled on Sunday night. Being sure of God's guidance and di-

rection led to a spirit of optimism. The congregation was told that the evening attendance would increase. It was stated as a fact. There was no doubt left in the minds of the people but that it would happen. Slowly but surely the idea began to penetrate into the hearts of the people.

Goal. We set our goal for fifty, which meant doubling our congregation. Even the chairman of the board said it could not be done. So the pastor had to show him. It took hours of ringing door-bells on behalf of the Sunday night service. It took well-written notices in the county paper. It took more time on sermons. It consumed hours in preparing for special music. But I did no begging.

In two weeks we realized our goal of fifty at the evening service. Then it meant work to keep the people coming.

Music. Christian folk love good music. They love to sing. They love to have their spirits lifted by means of a tune and meaningful words. A song leader from our own membership was secured. He told me when first asked: "I never go on Sunday night. But I'll do it for you next Sunday night." He has been there twenty-six Sunday evenings without missing once.

A \$4,000 organ was being used once a week. That is too much money to have invested for fifty-two hours' use a year. We brought the organ into the Sunday night service. We used both organ and piano. The use of both instruments brought a lift to the service that had been dreamed of by none. You can do the same in your church. Your people will love it.

Psychology. A certain amount of psychology is involved in the evening service. Sunday evening is a depress-

ing time of the week. The week end is almost over. Everyone is tired. Another week of difficult work looms before us.

Keeping this in mind, we need to have a Sunday evening service that will lift spirits to the height of real living. If we can make the people feel more alive, feel that life is beautiful and not dreary, we can keep them coming.

For that reason the lively song service was initiated. Very informal (our morning service is most formal), it meets the needs of those who attend. The hymns some ministers refuse to use were employed solely to give people a "lift" through their tunes.

As the services have continued, there has been a program of hymn education through which the great hymns of the church have been brought to their attention and substituted for the "gospel songs." The lift of the service continues.

After some months of this program on Sunday evening, a lady said to me: "I was brought up in the Episcopal Church. I love very formal services. I dislike very much the informality of the Sunday evening hour. But I keep coming. Even though I don't like the form of the service, my spirit is lifted. Prior to the time you had me promise to attend one evening service, Sunday evening had been the most depressing time in the week for me. Now I look forward to it."

Sermons. Heeding the advice of my professor in homiletics, I attempted to present the old, old story in a new, unique, and interesting way. During the first month of our Sunday

evening campaign, I tried to preach my best sermons on Sunday night. I put in more time on my Sunday night sermons. Since then I have sought to divide the time about equally.

There is no special theme for the Sunday night sermon. Sermons based upon the Christian calendar may appear at either service. Evangelistic

sermons are as likely to be heard in the morning as the evening.

It takes hours of hard work. It means reading, sweating, writing, and rewriting—but the people keep coming. And they will continue to do so! God is able to fill our sanctuary on Sunday nights. He also has power to fill yours.

Dress Up Your Newsletter

By OWEN MEREDITH

Whether his newsletter will be read or thrown away depends to a large extent on whether the pastor is willing to use some effort to make it appealing to the readers, says this writer, publicity director at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N. C. He describes some ways to make duplicated newsletters more readable.

BEHOLD, there was a certain newsletter, and it was written with skill and mimeographed with care. And the letter was given unto many people, and lo, they read it not, but straightway cast it away.

Have you made your newsletters appealing and easy to read? Your mimeograph machine is a worthy instrument, and with a little effort and know-how on your part it will produce top-notch letters.

You will need some materials but not many.¹ Of course, you already have a typewriter and know how to prepare a simple stencil for mimeographing.

You will need a small selection of cutting tools, including a ball-point stylus, a lettering guide stylus, and a shading wheel. These tools can be bought at any mimeograph supply house. Prices run from \$.50 to \$2.00 each.

Unless you have a steady hand and a flair for lettering, cut headlines and titles with a lettering guide. Decide on the sizes and styles of headings you want and select the proper guides. Prices range from \$2.50 to \$4.00. Also, you'll need a few shading plates, which cost about \$1.00 each.

With these tools you can get most of the desired effects. Learn to use

them skillfully and forget about large, expensive assortments.

You should be able to turn out top-notch mimeographed letters if you guide your work by the five factors below:

Arrangement of typed matter. For easy reading single-spaced lines should be no wider than three inches. This allows two columns to the average page. For variety, however, break lines of a page into both two and three columns and arrange them in a patchwork pattern like a newspaper.

To produce even right-hand margins, set the carriage stops on the typewriter at desired positions and type a preliminary copy, fitting as

many letters into the space as possible. Fill in extra spaces with x's.

In typing the stencil distribute these spaces between words in the line. For example:

The Preliminary Copy:

Don't forget to use hyphens when words are broken between lines. Often, to make words break more smoothly, you will find it easier to change a few words as the preliminary copy is typed. In the finished stencil, be careful to leave no "rivers of white" by putting spaces beneath spaces in columns.

The Finished Stencil:

Don't forget to use hyphens when words are broken between lines. Often, to make words break more smoothly, you will find it easier to change a few words as the preliminary copy is typed. In the finished stencil, be careful to leave no "rivers of white" by putting spaces beneath spaces in columns.

Vary the type itself by using different typewriters to cut the stencil. Typewriter faces come in several sizes and styles. The two most common sizes are pica, which is the larger, and elite, the smaller. Styles range from sans-serif, which is a neat, plain type, to serif, the type found on most typewriters.

Use a stylus to trace rules between columns, framing for illustrations, filler and border designs, and decorations for headings.

Prepared illustrations can be bought from your mimeograph supplier. In using them you cut out a section of the stencil and fix the illustration into place with mimeograph cement.

Choice of paper and ink. Color commands attention. Do not be afraid of colored inks and papers. They are no more expensive. Duplicating inks, for example, come in many colors but you need only red, green, and blue. These can be mixed to produce almost any color.

It's not necessary to change ink in the mimeograph machine for color runs. Just remove the ink pad and



¹ Duplicators and supplies can be ordered from The Methodist Publishing House; refer to the catalog, *Supplies for Church and Church School*, 1952-53.

cover the cylinder with a stencil typing film. Attach a new pad over this and apply colored ink with a brush. You need not saturate the entire pad. Apply only under areas to be reproduced.

Try using two colors for special events—or run off your masthead in colored ink, then draw on this supply for weekly mimeographing in black ink.

If you stick to black ink, vary the paper color. Mimeograph paper is available in scores of colors and textures.

Now and then, instead of setting lines in straight columns, arrange them to form a simple design such as a cross, a chalice, or an hourglass.

These typed designs require careful wording but will catch the reader's eye for an important message.

Use of hand decorations. Hand work is done directly on the stencil with a stylus. Use a shading plate for shadows and contrasts. Place the plate beneath the stencil and rub lightly over areas to be shaded.

Headlines and drawings add punch to the mimeographed page. They are attention-getters. They break up solid masses of type and make the page more interesting. Use lettering guides for headlines.

Stick to simple drawings. Those with a lot of detail give smudged reproductions. Place the drawing beneath the stencil and trace the outline with a stylus. Then use a plate for shading.

Folding and binding. Letters are usually folded from the side like a book or from the top like a writing tablet.

If you want to present your material in the form of a booklet, fold a blank sheet of paper into a rough dummy. Number the pages, then plan how sheets should be arranged on the stencil to come out in proper order.

Newsletters over four pages long should be bound. Use staples, strings, ribbon, or glue. If the paper is heavy enough, the pages can be stitched together with a sewing machine.

Binding can be done either through the center like *THE PASTOR*, or, if fairly thick, through the side like *The Christian Herald*.

Attached matter. Everything from printed invitations to autumn leaves

have been stapled to newsletters.

Many churches leave blank spaces in their letters and paste in snapshots. Such pictures are affixed neatly with dry mounting tissue, which can be

found on sale in camera shops.

So much for tips. The rest is up to you. Put that mimeograph machine to work and it will turn out some first-rate newsletters for you.

By Radio They Worship

By JOHN B. OMAN

Through a program planned especially for shut-ins, the services and sacraments of the church go out to the "unseen congregation" of the author, pastor of First Methodist Church, Trenton, N. J. He describes a unique way to administer Holy Communion to his radio audience.

JUST before the vacation days the telephone rang in the parsonage study. A woman was calling. She was hesitant, rather uncertain in her speech, and I detected sorrow in her voice.

"Reverend," she said, "my mother has just passed away and I have asked the mortician to request you to conduct her funeral service. You see, mother and I are members of your congregation; that is, your radio congregation."

She went on to tell me that for a number of years her mother had been an invalid and unable to attend the regular services of the church. Then, one Sunday morning she had worshipped with us by her radio, listening to a public service program of Station WBUD known as Chapel of Cheer. Chapel of Cheer, a fifteen minute early Sunday morning service, had an unusual beginning.

First Methodist Church had been regularly broadcasting its Sunday evening services. During the offering, with soft organ background, I spoke directly into the microphone to the sick and shut-ins that might be listening. This always included a word of cheer and comfort, a word of assurance from the scriptures, and a prayer especially for those physically unable to be in the visible congregation.

When our period of Sunday evening broadcasting was over we received so many words of appreciation for the "shut-in time" and requests that it be continued that the station manager asked if a Sunday morning radio service could not be planned to take the church to those unable to

come in person. This took a lot of originality and was time consuming, but the response was more than compensating.

These devotions were planned for those waiting for health and strength, whether they were required to enter a hospital or to remain at home; for sickness of short duration, and terminal cases.

There are problems and situations in illness and convalescence with which people do not ordinarily have to cope, such as anxiety, fear, loneliness, guilt, and the mystery of suffering and disease. These are spiritual problems as well as physical and psychological ones. "Chapel of Cheer" is intended to help persons meet the stresses that grow out of illness and to assist the family and friends adjust to these life situations.

The response has indicated that this radio ministry has helped great numbers to find comfort and guidance as they allow God to bless and restore health.

One of the finest things that has happened in my ministry has been the broadcasting of a service of Holy Communion. Afterward, many communicants indicated to me that the Lord's Supper meant more when broadcasted than when administered directly at their bedside; the reason being that the hymns, organ music, and vocal selections made it seem more like "being in church."

One of my predecessors, a minister now retired because of blindness, suggested that other ministers might provide communion for persons like himself, often unable to attend church

and free from the embarrassment of being a public spectacle at the altar.

After the call to worship and invocation, I announced that all the listening congregation that would later in the service like to receive Holy Communion, were invited to do so, and that they should provide themselves with a small cube of bread and a glass of grape juice or wine. Then a hymn was sung, providing an opportunity for the elements to be prepared before the ritual for Holy Communion began.

I preached a sermon inviting all those worshiping by their radios to accept Christ as Lord and to receive the broken body and shed blood of Christ with us wherever they were. The invitation to commune was given, the confession made, and the Prayer of Consecration offered, followed by the act of communion.

Before the benediction, all those of the radio congregation who communed were asked to send a card or letter stating that fact. The great number received was amazing.

To prepare my shut-ins for this service, the following announcement appeared in our weekly bulletin which is mailed to the congregation on Thursdays:

COMMUNION FOR SICK AND SHUT-INS

Sunday morning at 9:45 o'clock our broadcast "Chapel of Cheer" over WBUD (1490 on your dial) will be a Holy Communion service, prepared especially for the sick, shut-ins, and others unable to receive the sacrament at the altar of the church. Those wishing to commune will please provide themselves with a cube of bread, a small glass of grape juice, or wine, and receive with us the Lord's Supper.

If a pastor does not have a regular broadcast, he is asked to participate at least occasionally in a council of churches or ministerial union weekday broadcast. Here is his opportu-

nity to administer Holy Communion by means of radio.

Knowing sufficiently ahead of time of his broadcast date, a card or form letter carrying an announcement of the Lord's Supper service could be sent to the entire membership, or only to the shut-ins and sick, inviting them to commune. A newspaper announcement or advertisement is an added possibility for advertising. For the benefit of those listening who are of another faith, they too, early in the service, should be invited to prepare the elements and receive the sacrament at the Lord's table in their home, at the altar of their hearts.

A broadcasted Holy Communion service makes glad the heart of God's people, for there are many who, because of physical infirmity, for a long time have wanted to do this in remembrance of him.

Yes, the radio is helping to build First Methodist Church. People listen to "Chapel of Cheer." They are helped to meet the spiritual needs arising from illness. An awareness of God in their sickness brings them a keener sense of his reality through these Sunday morning devotions. They come to me wanting to serve him in and through the church. Many, as soon as they are well enough, accept our offer to minister to any spiritual need or emergency that arises in

their lives. They call upon me for the ministerial services I can render. The response is heartening.

They come to and join our church. They come and send their children to Sunday school. They volunteer for church work. They come for Baptism and Holy Communion. They come to my office for counsel, advice, and prayer; and I pray with them.

When persons worship by their radio, it is not to inspect the architecture or to see the choir and preacher; it is to worship God. They tune in to hear about him and to feel his presence. They are a part of the unseen congregation to give thanks to him for his mercy, for his help and comfort along a road that is filled with pain and suffering. As one woman wrote, "... an unbearable road if it weren't for the good Lord."

"I'm thankful that I have lived long enough to learn the benefits of sickness," wrote another.

After conducting the funeral service of this member of my radio congregation, her daughter decided First Methodist would be the church of her choice and she made it her spiritual home.

The extent to which the radio is helping to build First Methodist Church would amaze the average member that comes into our fellowship through some other means.

The Sunday Evening Fellowship

By JOHN Q. SCHISLER

(The author is secretary of the Division of the Local Church, Methodist Board of Education.)

IN A meeting of pastors and laymen recently, Herman H. Luetzow, pastor of Broadway Methodist Church, Kansas City, Missouri, was leading a discussion on "Increasing Attendance in the Church Services" and mentioned the Sunday Evening Fellowship in his church. Later someone in the group said: "Tell us more about the way you are solving the problem of the evening service." Luetzow replied that he did not think

of the Sunday Evening Fellowship as a way to solve the problem of the evening service, but as a means of ministering to the needs of his people. Then he described what is evidently a going concern in his church.

Dr. Luetzow has the right idea. The purpose of the evening fellowship is not to replace something; it is to add something. That it has done in the church which I attend, Belmont Methodist Church in Nashville, Tennessee. It has extended and enriched the fellowship in our church. It has made Sunday evening a joyous time for many church families.

Children, youth, young adults, adults, older adults, mix and mingle, sing and have a good time before and during and immediately following the 6 o'clock supper. The cost is 25 cents a person. Then the juniors go to their room for a program designed for them, and likewise the intermediates, seniors, and older youth go to their respective places for their youth fellowship program, and the adults remain together for a brief time of worship and a program of stimulating discussions.

The pastor of the church, his wife, the associate pastor, and the director of Religious Education are present in the services, but they are in the background. Others lead. Participants in the programs have included public school people, parents, Crusade scholars from other lands, public officials, including the governor of the state who is a Methodist, missionaries, and members of the local church. The program pattern is varied. Sometimes it is a panel. Again it is a great message such as T. T. Brumbaugh brought on the Orient. Then there is a stirring message by a representative of the county government on the problem of crime and the need for the Christian Church and its influence in the community, followed by questions and answers.

This particular church has a full Sunday morning of church services: worship at 8:30; Sunday school at 9:30; worship at 11:00 o'clock. It gives Sunday evening to the fellowship service described above. The Sunday Evening Fellowship service can be varied, so that the church which needs and wants an evening preaching service can have both. Many do.

Like any other part of the church school, the Sunday Evening Fellowship needs curriculum materials for the use of the various groups. The Editorial Division of the Board of Education has provided this in the *Sourcebook*.¹ This attractive quarterly is literally a mine of stimulating ideas, program suggestions, resource materials, references to other sources.

It is my judgment that pastors and their commissions on Christian Edu-

cation may greatly enrich the spiritual contributions of their churches

to families through the use of this extended fellowship program.

The Interest-Centered Program

By GRANTAS E. HOOPERT

How a community consciousness was developed among the people of one church by initiation of an interest-centered program is described here by the pastor of the Doyleburg (Pa.) Methodist Circuit.

WE ASK our church members to be loyal to the pledge to uphold their church by their prayers, presence, gifts, and service. The "second mile" of this pledge indicates that the church member is also obligated to uphold his community by exemplary Christian living. The church needs to assume a community-consciousness by being aware of the interests, relationships, and activities of the people of the community. To develop a church-community relationship the interest-centered church program is suggested.

A careful look at the ministry of Jesus reveals that his teachings began at the interest-center in the lives of the people and progressed to spiritual truths that became real experiences to them. If the church is to Christianize the lives of the people, it must begin at their points of interest and proceed to the spiritual facts of life.

The plans and purposes of Jesus were clear. If the church is to lead men and women to a sense of spiritual reality and meaningful Christian living, it must be true to its Christian purposes. Jesus caused people to re-examine their lives in the light of his teachings. If the church is to teach his Way effectively, it must examine itself in the light of the interest-centered technique that he used.

The following are five basic aims of the interest-centered church program.

1. To indicate in all areas of life that, "All things come of Thee, O Lord."
2. To emphasize Christian stewardship in all the areas of community life.
3. To help eliminate the tension be-

tween the secular and the sacred.

4. To Christianize the total interests, relationships, and activities of the people of the community.

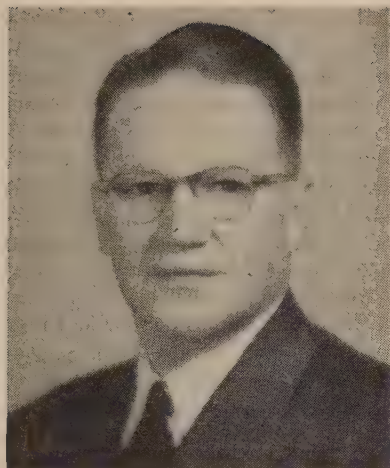
5. To help build a community dedicated to the redemption of men through Christ.

The very nature of this program is comprehensive. It is motivated by the simple challenge—"interest." Every community is endowed with numerous and diversified points of interest. These points of interest touch wide areas of the individual and corporate lives of the people. They reach into and beyond the local community to the wider world community. At these points lie the resources from which an interest-centered church program can be developed.

Studying, gathering, and refining these resources is necessary in order to have them meet the aims of this program. It is my purpose to mention some of the many points of interest and to show, in a small way, how two were developed into Christian interest-centered programs.

The following points of interest are a few from which this type of program can be promoted: soil conservation; rural living; gardening; homemaking; calling all mothers; life with father; child guidance; about our babies; courtship and marriage; family fun; people from other places; travel tales; organizations together; three-score club; couples club; vocation experts; look at books; our public schools; music, drama; flowers; hobbies; unforgettable good characters I've met; Christian good humor; home builders; Christianity in my work.

¹ Order from the branch of The Methodist Publishing House serving your conference, 45 cents a copy.



The programs are planned by the use of interest committees. By a simple survey and by being concerned with the interests of the people, key persons can be found readily for specific committees. For example, a flower interest program is being planned. Since flowers interest many people, it is not difficult to secure a working committee. The committee plans with the aims of the interest-centered program before them. They recall that Jesus said, *Consider the lilies . . .*

From this point they become a "ways and means" committee dedicated to the carrying out of the program in a challenging and meaningful manner. The pastor becomes the "steering" committee of one to guide all interest-centered activities to the Christian motive. Committees for the other areas of interest follow this method of launching their programs.

One area of my work presented an opportunity to teach the stewardship of rural life. Resource leaders of the various rural life agencies in the community agreed to co-operate with and participate in the program. Since there was interest in the grange, 4-H clubs, farming practices, and rural living, the opportunity was present to bring a Christian challenge to the community.

A preliminary meeting was held in the grange hall near the church. Here the aims of the interest-centered program were presented by the pastor. The leaders of the community's rural agencies were asked to make remarks to their groups relative to their work

and to relate their remarks to the aims of this program. The grange chaplain led in prayer. Then, the group proceeded to the church as they sang, "Onward, Christian soldiers."

The resource leaders participated in the church service. The grange members presented the special music. The 4-H group presented a short pageant in which they planted representative seed common to our community in soil that had been brought to the church from various farms of the community.

The congregation joined in the service of the dedication of the seed and the sower. Those present were challenged to faithful stewardship of the soil. The words of another pastor were recalled. He said, "What shall it profit a country community if its people work hard and accumulate large tracts of land and bank accounts and forget that the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein?"

The results of this interest-centered program can be noticed. One farmer stated his reaction by saying, "I see contour farming now from the right side—God's side." He has begun practicing more of it on his hillside farm. Other reactions in the community indicate that stewardship of the soil has become a Christian responsibility of our farmers. It provides the opportunity to co-operate with God to make the community a fertile field to exemplify Christian living.

Another interest area in our community was home building. It all happened when a man, retiring from working in a large industrial firm, decided to build a new home in our community. When it was discovered that this was to be a ranch type house, interest was aroused. Our established farm homes were not like that.

The interest was further heightened in our church when the certificates of transfer arrived for the people who were building the new home. An interest committee arose with a suggestion: "Let us go to the new home for a welcoming party and a dedication service." When the new owners were contacted concerning the plan, they were thrilled.

On an appointed evening our

church members gathered at the home. As the guests arrived introductions were made by the chairman and another member of the official board. When all had arrived, the pastor conducted the service of Dedication of a Home.

The spiritual tone of the service was enhanced as the pastor read the introductory sentence: "Peace be to this house." A spiritual impact was made as the Service of Dedication concluded. A program of old favorite songs, monologues, and instrumental music followed. Refreshments which the committee had brought were served in the closing fellowship period.

This interest-centered program relating the church and the home reminded those present to commit their lives to God's loving care as they dwell in houses made with human hands. Naturally, these new people in a new community and in a new home would have more than a casual interest in the church that was interested in their home. Here was the opportunity for others to catch new visions of Christian living because of this interest center—the Christian home.

The interest-centered church program has potentialities that can be developed in any community. Other interest centers can be promoted with enthusiasm and spiritual uplift. Through such interests the Christian influence can be exerted upon the total life of the community. Our communities can be built upon such foundations of spiritual interest that they will be instruments leading to the redemption of men through Christ.

Strayed Sheep

*We had two members bright and gay
Who flew from us the other day.
What was the reason they did go?
I cannot tell for I do not know.*

—Graham R. Hodges

The Minister and Biblical Illiteracy

By FRANCIS CHRISTIE

The minister must assume a large part of the responsibility for widespread ignorance of the Bible today, according to this author, who is professor of Religion in Birmingham-Southern College. He offers suggestions to the pastor who wants to develop new interest in the Bible among his church members.

WE HAVE heard (almost *ad nauseam*) of the general "religious illiteracy," especially concerning the Bible, which has beset us. "Biblical illiteracy" is no mere catch phrase that we have coined. People on all social and intellectual levels display an amazing ignorance concerning the contents of our scriptures. This is so true that we seem to be surprised when the President or some other politician displays knowledge of a portion of scripture. Many are ashamed of their ignorance, while others remain blissfully unaware of theirs.

The ministry has tried to shift the blame for this onto others. "It is because we do not have Bible in our public schools." "It is because the Bible is not read and taught in the homes." "It is because our Sunday schools are not adequately staffed and the teachers we have are not well trained." All these factors are part of the picture, but the ministry must reserve for itself the major part. In preaching and by leadership the minister has not made his people Bible conscious. There are several reasons for this.

Many seminary graduates who have taken courses in Bible in which critical methods are employed think that they can no longer make adequate use of the scriptures in dealing with their people. They feel that an exposure to the critical tools makes it impossible for them to discuss "Bible" with their parishioners with-

out offending or harming them in some way.

While many who feel thus are quite sincere, it is to be feared that this is indicative of a feeling of intellectual superiority to the unlearned masses. Whatever the cause, the minister who entertains such attitudes does little to increase appreciation for or knowledge of the scriptures.

Often the opposite is true. The minister has supplied himself with the critical tools and goes forth to use his implements without mercy on any occasion which offers such opportunity. He is out to "startle the natives." Many times he succeeds in upsetting or confusing his hearers, and finds they are not impressed with the wisdom which he, like the young man, Elihu, in the book of Job, has fetched from afar. His exhibitionism lessens his chances to develop new interests within his congregation concerning the greater themes of the Bible.

Topical and "contemporary" or "timely" preaching send the preacher to his concordance with some regularity, but the use of the Bible itself is secondary. The pulpiteer who strings together a few illustrations from the newspaper, *The Reader's Digest*, popular stories, and sermons he has read goes to the Bible on Saturday merely to find a passage to read before he favors the listeners with his "sermon." After all, it is something they expect.

Recently I heard a minister read

halfway through a New Testament selection only to discover that because of a mistake in the bulletin he was reading the wrong passage. Obviously he had not used the lesson as an integral part of his sermon preparation. If the preacher considers his sermon of more import than the scripture itself, how can we expect anything other than biblical illiteracy?

There are ministers who feel insecure and inadequate because they have not developed the technical skills for dealing with the biblical material. In all honesty they feel that they are not qualified to serve as interpreters of the Bible. The author is surprised to find this sense of inadequacy and insecurity expressed by so many seminary graduates with whom he has talked.

Too many ministers, for various reasons, have never developed purposeful concern for reading the Bible for devotion and study. Some do not seem to find time for such activity. A prominent preacher in Methodism candidly admits that he has neither the time nor any consuming interest to study the Bible. This scriptural lag shows up in his sermons and in the general level of knowledge concerning the Bible within his congregation.

The minister who keeps close enough to his Sunday school to improve the level of biblical instruction is something of a rarity. He should know his teachers and always place himself in a position to aid them in improving the instruction which they provide from week to week. He should read the Sunday school literature or at least a representative sample. But how many of us do these things?

Even men who have great interest in the Bible and its place in the lives of their people often fail to make their knowledge and training available to those laymen who voluntarily assist in conducting the educational affairs of the church.

We have stated a problem and a few (not all) of the reasons why it is a problem. Now attention is shifted to steps in solution of the problem. As the above list is not exhaustive, neither is the list which follows.

The minister should have the skill to use the intellectual tools he has accumulated in leading his people to an

appreciation of the values and meanings of the scriptures. This precludes the sophomoric attitude of omniscience that some might be tempted to assume.

It also calls to reckoning the man who says, 'sadly and with self-pity, "When I got through with my Bible courses in seminary there wasn't anything left in the Bible for me." Perhaps there was less left of what he thought was there, but what the writers meant to say is still there. Certainly there has been some tampering or loss of meaning in translation, and this is one reason for the teacher's working with the "scholarly" problems—to get at the words of the original writers, the basic meanings.

The minister should be able to utilize the Bible in his preaching. This means that he should be so thoroughly acquainted with the material that he can use it for illustrative ma-

terial. Much Bible teaching can be done in this way. But a person will say, "Isn't it better to use contemporary illustrations?" In some instances it is better to use such "contemporary" illustrations, but we should like to remind the reader that the Bible contains a great number of "contemporary" illustrations for any who will take the trouble to find out the backgrounds for the passages.

The minister can make effective use of the Bible in his conversations and his pastoral calling. The sick or shut-in on whom we call might like to read or discuss a particular passage. Often it is well to discuss the passage for the Sunday school lesson with the teachers.

To do these last two things the minister needs to become a "Bible-saturated" man. He has to study the contents of the scriptures until they become an integral part of his very

being. Of course, we maintain the position that critical knowledge is important, but it is essential that the minister know what the Bible contains, and not be content with a lot of information *about* the Bible from other sources.

If one does not have a love for the scriptures that leads him to study them diligently, then he should search his heart for the reason. If he is too lazy, he should be reminded that his is a service of breaking the bread of life to God's people.

In all sincerity it must be said that we are beset with biblical illiteracy and that we ministers are largely responsible for the situation. But with consecrated use of the Bible in our devotional and intellectual lives, in our contacts with our people, and in our preaching, we can help to develop a new interest in the Bible and its meaning for our times.

Outlines of Hope in Ezekiel

By **HOWARD L. STIMMEL**

Though a prophet of doom, Ezekiel had a message of hope and deliverance that made dry bones come alive, observes the pastor of First Methodist Church, Plattsburg, N. Y. This is the final article of two on the preaching values in Ezekiel.

THERE is a story of some coal miners who were trapped by a cave-in at the mine. Those on the outside worked desperately to reach the trapped men before they should suffocate. As the would-be rescuers burrowed their way toward the victims, at last they could hear the latter tapping on the wall a message in the Morse code. Slowly spelling out the letters the others finally made out these words: "Is there any hope?"

It is a question that is asked over and over again. It must have been raised many times in the sixth century before Christ. The Jewish nation had crashed in ruin. Jerusalem was a heap of rubble, and most of her people were in exile. Some of them must have come to Ezekiel, that intrepid prophet who shared the rigors of the exile with his compatriots. They must have come to him more than once, for he could see more deeply into the heart of things than

they could. "Prophet, tell us, is there any hope?"

The book of Ezekiel falls neatly into two halves of twenty-four chapters each. The first half contains a message of almost unrelieved doom. The second part contains a message of hope. At first glance, there would seem to be a thoroughgoing inconsistency here, but on consideration we find no discrepancy.

Ezekiel was dead-set against the shallow social optimism of his time. Before the final crash in Jerusalem many were saying, "It can't happen here." Even after the exile had begun, many were saying, "It can't last very long." Ezekiel felt called of God to shatter the popular illusion of a quick deliverance.

When at length the worst had happened, then another kind of message was called for. There is no need to continue announcing the crack of doom after doom has cracked! When

the blow falls and the shallow optimists are deflated then one must search out, if he can, the deeper foundations of hope.

The underlying unity in this two-fold aspect of Ezekiel's message is found in his experience of God. God had called him to shatter the shabby structure of man's social illusions. Beyond that God had also called him to lay bare the rock on which man's hopes could reasonably be built. Ezekiel declared, as other great prophets had done before, that man's hope rests not on his own strength or cleverness but on the eternal purpose and power of God.

In the latter part of Ezekiel's book there are three striking pictures which figure forth the outlines of hope as Ezekiel conceived it. The first picture is found in chapter thirty-four. It is a portrayal of God as the good shepherd of his people.

As far as we know, Ezekiel was one of the first in the scriptures, in point of time, to portray God as shepherd. It would go hard with the false shepherds, the prophet thought. "*Ho,*



Stimmel

shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep?" (Ezek. 34:2).

When I was a student in seminary it was said that the attitude of some ministers was not that of the old hymn, "A charge to keep I have," but rather, "A charge I have to keep me." There is a difference between feeding the sheep and feeding *on* the sheep. Ezekiel believed that when God, the good shepherd, asserted himself the sheep would be fed and the false shepherds put to confusion.

The prophet went on to picture the good shepherd as gathering his scattered flock together again from the captivity into which they had been carried: *I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the crippled, and I will strengthen the weak . . .* (Ezek. 34:16). There is also a hint that the good shepherd will divide the sheep from the goats and will judge between the fat and the lean sheep, and that he will appoint a human shepherd who will do God's will in caring for the flock.

As we ponder this portrayal of the divine shepherd we recall that in scripture a "shepherd" often means a ruler, so that there is involved here not only the thought of kindly, benevolent care, but also the thought of power, of authority. Ezekiel here suggests that a defeated people's final hope lies in the reality, the power, the goodness of God. He would have the world know that there is a moral governance in the universe beyond our human contriving.

In times of overwhelming calamity it is helpful to let our minds come to rest on this conviction. When men and nations are defeated they are likely to despair if they are told that there is no help save in themselves. To be able to affirm in dark hours that there is a divine wisdom and power that works with us in all things to bring about what is good—that is the beginning of sanity, the beginning of our personal and a social salvation.

Now let us look at Ezekiel's second picture: It is the vision of the valley of dry bones. We find this picture in chapter thirty-seven. It is indeed one of the most weird passages in the Bible: *The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley; it was full of bones. . . . behold, there were very many upon the valley; and lo, they were very dry. And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord God, thou knowest." Again he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live"* (Ezek. 37:1-5).

As the prophet stood viewing the bleached remains of many skeletons he opened his mouth at God's command and preached over the bones. Then a remarkable thing happened. The scene, as Ezekiel described it, is almost like a movie run in reverse. There was first a rattling sound as the various bones clicked into place, forming complete skeletons. Then sinews and flesh and skin appeared and covered the skeletons. Once more Ezekiel preached and the breath of life entered into the corpses, and, as Ezekiel puts it, . . . *they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great host* (Ezek. 37:10).

In the verses that follow, Ezekiel gives the key to his symbolism. The dry bones represent the death of the nation. *"Behold they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off'"* (Ezek. 37:11). The bringing to life of these skeletons is a symbolic way of declaring that there is going to be a national resurrection. Hope will revive. The nation will yet live again.

It is striking here to note that the miracle occurs while a man is preaching the word of God. The suggestion is that God has power, through the ministry of preaching, to effect a national resurrection. We recall in passing that Ruskin defined a sermon as thirty minutes in which to raise the dead. This is something worth thinking about in a day like ours when some have called for a moratorium on preaching.

Ezekiel's picture stimulates our thought in various ways. We are reminded that national rebirth waits upon an appeal to the minds and hearts of men, for preaching is addressed to the mind and heart. Ideologies of various kinds cannot be dealt with successfully by physical means. Bishop Francis J. McConnell remarked years ago that he did not quite see how we were going to get better ideas into men's heads by running bayonets into their intestines. Something must be done first to the mind and heart.

We must not overlook the power of the spoken word. With all of our modern techniques for getting ideas across we err if we underestimate the power of the living voice. I remember in the late nineteen-thirties hearing portions of one of Adolf Hitler's broadcasts. I did not understand a word he said, but in his voice was a power to be reckoned with in the world—tragically so!

Phillips Brooks defined preaching as "the bringing of truth through personality." That process is not in any sense obsolete.

We are also moved to reflect on the fact that Ezekiel himself gives us an example of a great preacher at work in a time of social catastrophe, a preacher who knew how to do more than harp on one string. It is all too easy in such a time to become a prophet of doom.

Morton Scott Enslin writes that he is ". . . full to nausea of the gospel of doom which is coming in such windy gusts from many pulpits." He is tired of what he calls ". . . constant yammering at the hopeless mess we are in, that man is utterly unable to do anything about it. . . ." We need, he says further, a ". . . radiant and quickening confidence that life is not hopeless, that God is still 'within the

shadows keeping watch above his own."¹ I am convinced that he has a point.

A man like Ezekiel knew how to use word pictures to help a defeated generation recover a better perspective in their faith. God the good shepherd is real. The beginning of our hope is found at the point where God's truth gets into men's minds and hearts through the inspired voice of one of his spokesmen so that they begin once more to think God's thoughts after him and to reconstruct their faith in terms of his purpose.

For the third picture we turn to chapter forty-seven. The closing chapters of Ezekiel contain a kind of glorified blueprint of the restored Jerusalem and particularly of the restored temple. These chapters make tedious reading. On the whole they are the least interesting and the least valuable in the book. Ezekiel's blueprints for the restored community are something like the social blueprints that modern preachers sometimes offer for the building of a brave new world. They very quickly become dated.

In chapter forty-seven, however, there is a picture of the restored temple which challenges our imagination with its inexhaustible suggestiveness. In swift strokes, Ezekiel pictures the new temple which he believed would rise out of the ruins of the old. As the prophet stands inspecting it, he notices that a stream of water is gushing out from under the altar and from under the threshold, and that it flows from the temple out into the world—waters to the ankles, waters to the knees, waters to the loins, a great river of water that cannot be passed through.

It is life-giving water. Everything it touches comes alive. It touches the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea is the most dense body of water on the face of the earth. So heavy and bitter and salty is it that no living thing has ever been found there. Yet, as Ezekiel watches, he seems to see the stream of living water which flows from the temple bringing to life things as dead as the Dead Sea. Then he notices further that on the banks of the stream trees are growing. Wonderful trees they are, trees that bear fruit good

for food the year around, and leaves for healing.

Centuries later the writer of the Book of Revelation in the New Testament seized upon elements in this picture for his own outline drawing of God's new order when sin and all manner of evil are finally defeated and Christ is triumphant. Ezekiel's imagery, moreover, has found its way into our modern hymnals:

*See the streams of living waters,
Springing from eternal Love,
Well supply thy sons and daughters,
And all fear of want remove;
Who can faint, while such a river
Ever flows their thirst t' assuage?
Grace which, like the Lord, the Giver,
Never fails from age to age.*

Ezekiel, of course, was not thinking of the modern Christian Church and of its place and function in the world of today, but I submit that the root of the matter was in him.

His vision of hope embraced the picture of a church at the center of the life of a community, a church which had something vital to contribute. In one of his great prayers for the church Walter Rauschenbush said, "Oh baptize her afresh in the life-giving spirit of Jesus." The life-giving spirit of Jesus is the most vital element in the stream which flows forth from the church into the world. It includes the story of Jesus' words and deeds, the record of what he meant to his followers in the days of the "first, fine, careless rapture."

There is also the continuing incarnation of his spirit in the successive generations of believers. This is the most precious element in the stream of influence which the church sends forth into the world.

The life-giving stream has in it properties which can arrest social decay and furnish health instead. In recent months we have been shocked again and again by disclosures of corruption in high places in our political and economic life. It will take more than a national election, more than a change of parties to sweeten the stagnant waters of our political life.

Education needs a new touch of the life-giving stream. Much of what passes for education is sterile because it is cut off from the high faith which

really has power to educe the best that men have in them.

Individuals, no less than communities and nations, need the touch of that life-giving stream. How many suffer from an emptiness of spirit; how many break down under the tensions of modern life; how many haggard faces there are, thin and deeply furrowed by sorrow and frustration and fear!

The church still sends forth this marvelous river of spiritual grace. On the banks of the river are trees which bear fruit the whole year around—fruit that is good for food, and leaves for healing. In Ezekiel's picture the stream issues from under the altar. That is to say, the stream springs forth from the experience of worship as men respond to God's outpouring grace.

Emil Brunner speaks of "the divine-human encounter." We need to be reminded often that worship is the central activity in the life of the church. The church does many things and undertakes many forms of service to the community. Rightly so, but worship is central. Apart from worship the many other things soon lose their savor and their life-giving quality. Prophet and priest here join hands and kneel together before the Holy of Holies. If we are wise unto salvation, we will kneel with them.

"Is there any hope?" Yes, if we build our faith on the kind of foundations outlined for us long ago by the prophet Ezekiel. First of all, this means believing in a kind of God who is at the mercy of our human failures and tragedies and who is still on the job after the world has done its worst.

What this kind of faith implies is suggested in the three pictures at which we have just looked: God, the good shepherd—a power not ourselves that makes for righteousness. Resurrection in the valley of dry bones—God's truth coming to us through the personalities of God's spokesmen and creating new minds and hearts within us. The temple and the life-giving stream—the God-centered fellowship, the religious institution at the heart of the community through which renewing influences are continually poured into the life of the world.

¹ "Please Take Off the Grape," *The Pulpit*, January, 1952, pp. 22-23.

The Morning Service

By R. P. MARSHALL

The way in which a minister conducts the morning worship service reflects his attitude as to the importance of that service, asserts the pastor of St. John's Church (Methodist), Sunbury, Pa. In this article, the second in a series on use of the ritual, he suggests how the minister may properly conduct this service.

IN OUR discussion of the conduct of worship in the morning service, we have reached the point where the minister has received the offering and the congregation has sung the response. Now it is time to join in singing the sermon hymn. The people are still standing, and it is well for the organist to modulate easily into the proper key without a sudden break.

If the hymn numbers are placed on the hymn boards the congregation is able to find the place without announcement. Here it would be well to remind ourselves that the fewer directions given by the minister the better. After the people become accustomed to the various acts required of them, it should be unnecessary to call their attention to the need for standing or sitting.

The sermon hymn usually should conform to the general theme of the discussion. At least it should not conflict with that theme.

The minister should move from his place before the altar to the pulpit side of the chancel during the singing of the hymn. As this comes to a close he will make his way to the pulpit, avoiding any appearance of haste. A layman in my congregation brought this to my attention one Sunday when he criticized what he called my nervousness. He said that I dashed into the pulpit as if I had been on a leash and was now set free; that, he said, was a reflection upon the importance of the worship service.

I had not meant to give that impression, but since then I have been careful to take my time in mounting the pulpit stairs.

The sermon should begin with some sort of ascription which will convey the idea of its sacredness. I like the custom of some ministers who always begin by saying, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." We may use, instead, a very short prayer.

The content of the sermon does not come into this discussion, but we must consider the question of length. Most ministers have accepted the principle that their message should not be longer than thirty minutes, and some hold to a maximum of twenty.

There is a temptation to call attention to the length of the sermon by giving frequent assurances as to our ability to stop at a certain time. Such references to time are psychologically out of place. If you know that you are able to keep the attention of your congregation for a certain period, then use that much time if you need it; but do not call attention to it by a series of "progress reports" as you go along. The sermon is of equal importance with the worship service, but it need not be of the same length.

Shall we sing a hymn at the close of the service? The old Methodist practice of using an invitation hymn is still enshrined in our Order of Worship, but it is discounted in practice. Most of us feel that the morning

service is almost exclusively addressed to believers and that an invitation is somewhat out of place. However, we should not be dogmatic about this.

Some sermons call for an invitation and a hymn. Some do not. In the latter case, it is well to close with a very short prayer and come down from the pulpit. Going to the center of the chancel, stand before the altar facing the people, and pronounce the benediction, using one of the common forms. We should be careful to make this as impressive as possible, remembering that the benediction is not a dismissal, but a blessing upon the people in the name of God.

Prayers should not be addresses to the people or a rehashing of the events of the week. God knows what has happened. It is possible to make our pastoral prayers very touching and familiar by mentioning the names of those in trouble and sickness, but it is a dangerous thing to do. Omission of a name, or mispronunciation of one, will cause trouble.

Here is a problem that is inherent in the practice of extempore prayer. We can learn to pray acceptably, but we do not usually do so.

The pastoral prayer should gather up in general terms the petitions which might come from the congregation as a whole. We may thank God for his mercy and goodness; we may pray for spiritual and temporal blessings of a general nature. Outside of this, we are in danger of making the prayer a private exercise delivered in public.

Study the pulpit prayers of great preachers and model your own after those which seem to meet the needs of your congregation. Use the Collects freely, leaving off the "Amens" and putting them together to form a longer prayer. Occasionally use

written prayers of other men and of your own. Prepare your prayers as you would your sermons.

How long should the pastoral prayer be? I believe that four minutes is long enough, and three minutes is to be preferred. No congregation can keep in an attitude of prayer for much longer than that, and surely we are not heard for our much speaking. I have often wondered why we ministers are so loath to accept Jesus' teachings on the subject. The only model prayer he gave can be said in less than a minute.

Now that we have brought the service to a close, we might give a glance at the chancel furniture we have been using.

First, the altar. It should be at least six feet long in a small church and nine to twelve feet long in a large one—if the chancel is of proportionate length. In makeshift chancels it is often impossible to use a long altar. It should be high enough that one may read from the service book (placed on the missal-stand) when standing up and low enough that it will not be out of sight when the minister kneels. The proper height is 39 or 40 inches from the floor. It should be placed on a platform extending 36 to 42 inches in front of the altar and 6 to 8 inches beyond the ends of it. This will give one step immediately in front of the altar.

It may be elevated above the floor of the nave to a height of 36 to 42 inches, with from 3 to 7 steps from chancel railing to altar. There is a tradition regarding the number of steps, but it is not always observed. According to the tradition, the steps should be 3, 5, or 7.

Behind the altar may be a dossal or a reredos. The former is a curtain made of brocade or velvet and hung so as to show vertical folds. If made of brocade, it may have ecclesiastical designs upon it, the most common being some sort of stylized cross. When made of beautiful material in scarlet or blue and gold, it makes a striking center of attention and forms a background for the altar brass. The reredos, a screen or partition wall, is made of wood or stone, carved and decorated. If done well, it can be very effective, but dark woods tend to give a somber effect.

The pulpit in most chancel-type churches is built in massive style and is often in barrel form, enclosing the minister on three sides. This may prove somewhat of a hindrance to those who like to move around, but it is a great boon to those in the congregation who dislike to imitate the spectators at a badminton game in an effort to keep the preacher in focus. I suppose that such pulpits, combined with the growing use of microphones, have had a great deal to do with the change to a more dignified type of pulpit oratory. Billy Sunday would have refused to be confined in what he called a "box stall" such as this. But the average parish minister soon comes to like the feeling of dignity and security that it gives.

The lectern is usually made of wood, but may be of brass or wrought iron. Elbert Conover has reminded us that the lectern is often movable and may be placed in various positions. Its preferred place is at the extreme end of the chancel on the side opposite the pulpit. There is no rule concerning the placing of these two objects, and their position varies.

A common objection to the use of a lectern is that it is "Roman." A visit to a Catholic Church will show that the lectern is not even used in most of these. The lectern is a Protestant development, but it traces back to the early church custom of having two *ambons*, or reading desks. Some lecterns are made in the form of an eagle with outstretched wings.

The large well-bound Bible should be placed on the lectern. It is a significant and beautiful custom to open the Bible with reverence before the beginning of the service. This may be done by the acolyte during the organ prelude. Bookmarks may be used to show the place for the lessons.

The font should be placed outside the chancel rail and at one side, or it may be placed in a special setting at the rear of the nave, or on one side aisle. It should never be placed inside the chancel, as baptism is the entrance to the Christian life and should be administered within the nave.

The font should be of stone or wood and may have a bowl of silver or

other metal if it has no drain. The bowl should be emptied after each baptism and cleaned thoroughly.

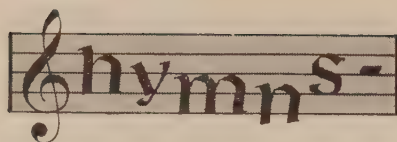
Something should be said concerning the arrangement of the choir. In the chancel-type church, the choir should be divided or should be placed at one side, outside the chancel. This form is often found in Lutheran churches and is permissible. Also found is the arrangement by which the choir occupies the rear balcony.

Some choir leaders do not like the divided choir and contend that it is hard to direct. This style is often used successfully by having the organist lead from his place at the console. If the console is placed in a well at one side, with a part of the choir beside him and the other part facing him, the choir-master will be able to direct with ease. Other arrangements make use of a long mirror placed on one side, by the use of which he can be seen by the choir. Experience seems to prove that the divided choir is capable of producing good music without the distraction of a standing choir director.

The balcony choir is preferable if the director prefers to conduct by arm movements. He can thus indulge in his gyrations without annoying the congregation. One thing is to be remembered: the choir exists only as an aid to worship. It must not seek to call attention to itself.

There are many beautiful chants in *The Methodist Hymnal* which can be sung by any choir with a little practice. Chants are the most ancient form of ecclesiastical music, and are particularly suitable for liturgical services. The common prejudice against them is without foundation. They are not difficult, and if they were printed in the usual manner, the congregation would think nothing strange in using them.

The average small congregation never realizes that the popular response "All things come of Thee, O Lord," is a chant. They have learned it by ear and have perhaps never seen it in musical notation. I have found that any congregation can be taught to sing the "Gloria in Excelsis," and this ancient hymn should be sung by the entire congregation at the communion service.



The Psalms in Hymns

By F. FAGAN THOMPSON

As a help in becoming better acquainted with the devotional literature of the Bible, the pastor of Norwood Methodist Church, Birmingham, Ala., suggests this service of psalms in hymns chosen from The Methodist Hymnal.



PRELUDE: (Based on French or German chorale tune: 6,¹ "Lasst uns erfreuen"; 67, "Ein' Feste Burg"; or 594, "Picardy.")

The vitality of the Psalms in the worship and devotional life of the church is unquestioned. Many of the finest hymns based upon these songs have been read, chanted, or sung by unnumbered men and women down through the long years. Though the temple at Jerusalem where they were once sung in all their glory has long since crumbled into decay, the Psalms still claim the greatest following of any group of poems ever written. We do well to remember our debt to them.

INVOCATION: (Suggestion: use prayer on "Praise" in the *Book of Worship*, p. 347.)

HYMN 626: "O come, let us sing"

Choir

This chant, known as the "Venite," is based upon Psalm 95 as found in the "Great Bible" of 1539. The chant itself was the battle hymn of the Knights Templars and was sung by them as they forged toward the Holy Land. Interestingly enough, this psalm was used from the Book of Common Prayer of 1552 by the Reformed Church of Scotland before John Knox's Book of Common Order was introduced to them. John Wesley said on one occasion that Methodists should not assemble for public worship without singing it.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH.

GLORIA PATRI.

The Gloria Patri, or "Lesser Doxology," was introduced into the Christian service in the second century to emphasize belief in the Trinity. It came in the English church to follow the Psalms. In other churches it was used after the introit or after the creed.

Worship the Lord of Man's World

HYMN 13: "All people that on earth do dwell" Congregation

The metrical version of Psalm 100 by William Kethe has appeared in psalm and hymn books almost continually for 375 years. In all probability it was written so that it could be sung to "Old 100th."

Kethe, a native of Scotland, is supposed to have fled to Geneva to escape the punishment of Queen Mary. It is possible the psalm was metricized during that period.

HYMN 70: "The Lord's my Shepherd"

Choir

This metrical version of Psalm 23 appeared in the *Scottish Psalter* of 1650. We may safely say there is no hymn like this one. Men and women have found consolation in the metrical version of this psalm through the years. "Dr. John Ker says, 'Every line of it, every word of it, has been engraven for generations in Scottish hearts, has accompanied them from childhood to age, from their homes to all the seas and lands where they have wandered, and has been to a multitude no man can number the rod and staff of which it speaks, to

guide and guard them in dark valleys, and at last through the darkest'" (Quoted in *The New Methodist Hymn-Book Illustrated*, by John Telford, Epworth Press, 1935, p. 42).

Worship the Lord of the Seven Thunders

Franz Delitzsch calls Psalm 29 "The Psalm of the Seven Thunders" because the expression, "The voice of the Lord," recurs seven times (Samuel Terrien, in *The Psalms and Their Meaning for Today*, Bobbs-Merrill, \$3, page 40). It may be that Revelation 10:3 refers to this expression also: *And the angel called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring; when he called out, the seven thunders sounded* (R. S. V.).

Regardless of how the expression came into being the psalmist is able to overcome his fear of thunderstorm. Instead of being conquered by it, he sees in it an opportunity for praise and thanksgiving.

HYMN 61: "The Lord our God is clothed with might" (Psalm 29:3)

Baritone Solo

This hymn on the divine sovereignty, though couched in language rarely used today, is unusual in both its poetic fervor and in its expression. H. Kirke White showed unusual artistic ability at an early age. His father wanted him to follow his trade of butcher, but the boy early showed great skill at mechanical drawing and in playing the piano by ear. Converted under the impetus of the Wesleyan Movement, he sought to satisfy his deep love by preparing

¹ All hymn numbers are from *The Methodist Hymnal*.

himself for the ministry. He went at his many interests with such fervor that he may be rightfully regarded as having literally worked himself to death at the age of twenty-one.

PRAYER.

OFFERING.

Worship the Lord of the Universe

HYMN 66: "The spacious firmament on high" (Psalm 19:1-6) Choir

Joseph Addison was probably the greatest English writer of his day. He stands head and shoulders above most English men of letters. This particular hymn, based on the first several stanzas of Psalm 19, appeared in *The Spectator* of Saturday, August 23, 1712. At the close of an article on "Faith and Devotion" he pays tribute to the psalmist and introduces the hymn in the following manner: "As such a bold and sublime manner of thinking furnishes very noble matter for an ode, the reader may see it wrought into the following one." (Robert Guy McCutchan, *Our Hymnody*. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, \$4.50, p. 95.)

Worship the Lord of Zion

HYMN 370: "O for a heart to praise my God" (Psalm 51:10) Congregation

This hymn by Charles Wesley is from *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1742.

John Fletcher of Madley said regarding this hymn "Here is undoubtedly an evangelical prayer for the love which restores the soul to a state of sinless rest and scriptural per-

fection" (*Our Hymnody*, p. 385).

HYMN 7: "Now thank we all our God" (Psalm 47:1) Congregation

This hymn is known as the German "Te Deum." It is to Germany what Old 100th is to English-speaking people. Both Bach and Luther recognized that the Protestant trend to strongly rhymic and melodic music was detrimental to the worship of the church. The chorale not only was a worthy expression of congregational singing (a fundamental and popular movement of the Reformation) but it also preserved enough of the "churchy" music of the earlier unison plain song and polyphonic forms to escape the more rhythmic religious jazz.

Worship God Through Trust

HYMN 80: "O my soul, bless God, the Father" (Psalm 103) Congregation

This is an excellent metrical version of Psalm 103. There have been only slight changes from the actual wording of the several verses.

It is interesting to note this metrical version and a hymn based upon the same psalm, Henry F. Lyte's "Praise, my soul, the King of heaven" (No. 77). Though definitely based upon the psalm, the rendering is free with little effort to use the exact wording of the original.

Worship God for His Divine Goodness

HYMN 360: "O Thou, to whose all-searching sight" (Psalm 139:2-4) Congregation

This hymn by Zinzendorf, based

upon an older hymn by Adam Drese, was translated freely by John Wesley shortly after meeting the Moravians on his voyage to Georgia. It was published in the John Wesley's *Psalms and Hymns*, 1738. The influence of the Moravians upon the Wesleyan movement was far-reaching.

HYMN 347: "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds" (Psalm 73:25) Choir

This hymn may be regarded as a paraphrase of the great Latin hymn of Bernard of Clairvaux. With "Jesus, Thou Joy of loving hearts" (345) and "Jesus, the very thought of Thee" (348) it represents short centos from a long Latin hymn of forty-two stanzas attributed to Bernard. It exemplifies John Newton's famous saying: "I remember two things: that I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Saviour." In his own life we know how Christ's saving power lifted him from a life of debauchery to a "strong son of Jesus Christ."

HYMN 324: "God is my strong salvation" (Psalm 27:1-3) Congregation

The Psalms were a constant source of inspiration to James Montgomery, the writer of this hymn. It is based upon Psalm 27: *The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

BENEDICTION: Hymn 614: "The Lord bless you and keep you" Choir

This benediction, based upon Numbers 6:24-26, is an Old Testament benediction. It was written by Peter Christian Lutkin, joint musical editor of *The Methodist Hymnal* of 1905.

Liturgical Question Box

QUESTION: *May the choir in a chancel arrangement face forward during the anthem?*

ANSWER: The choir, in this style, faces inward on either side of the chancel (or it may be seated on one side only), and it is improper for the singers to face forward while singing. The anthem is in praise to God, not for the delight of the people. Let the singers maintain their usual position while singing all responses, anthems, etc.

QUESTION: *Is the chancel form (with a divided choir) as acceptable musically as the concert-style, where the choir faces the congregation from behind the minister or the altar? I find that many choir directors do not like this style.*

ANSWER: Many directors have not had any experience with the divided seating of the choirs, and fear that the musical effect is not the best. They would prefer to have the choir face the congregation and put on a "performance," and they often stand in front of the singers, waving a baton. It is the delicate task of the minister to convince them that they are to assist in the worship of God and not to entertain the congregation.

As to the effectiveness of the ecclesiastical music performed by a divided choir, the answer is found in the fact that some of the greatest choirs have been those in the liturgical churches. The church choir is a part of the ministry of worship and not a group of professional entertainers.

—R. P. Marshall

Concerning Children's Day

By MARY ALICE JONES

Recently a young ministerial student wrote to the General Board of Education asking if there was any place for a man in the leadership of the church's program for children. He said that as he continued his preparation for the Christian ministry, and accepted various assignments of field work, he was becoming more and more convinced that the greatest opportunity the church faced was in work with children.

He was told that the program of Christian education of children feels seriously the need of the support and active leadership of ministers as well as lay workers, of men as well as women. It is not something which may be regarded as a secondary task.

The 1952 General Conference of The Methodist Church called upon all local churches to give more thought to their children, and proposed the observance of a special day to call to the attention of the church membership the needs of the children. The following legislation was passed:

"The first Sunday of National Family Week, or some other day selected by the Annual Conference, may be designated as *Children's Day*, for the purpose of emphasizing the responsibility of the Church for our children, the same to be observed without a church-wide offering. The program for such a day shall be the concern of the Division of the Local Church of the General Board of Education and the Boards of Education of the various Annual Conferences." [Discipline, ¶233(6)]

Carrying out the instructions, the Division of the Local Church of the General Board of Education has prepared a program, "That They May Know God," for the use of the churches in observing Children's Day, and has prepared several articles giving suggestions for its promotion. The program for this year is prepared by Leon M. Adkins, pastor of University Methodist Church, Syracuse, New York, with the assistance of Lena Mereness, Director of Christian Education of the First Methodist Church, Schenectady, New York. It lifts up the central statements of the Episcopal address at General Conference and shows how the program of Christian education of children may help realize in the lives

of growing persons these great affirmations.

Copies of the program may be ordered from the Service Department, General Board of Education, Box 871, Nashville 2, Tennessee. Price: 10 cents each; 3 copies for 25 cents, cash accompanying order.

THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS WORK CAMP SCHEDULED

The first summer term of a special Methodist work camp for theological students is scheduled at Garrett Biblical Institute for June 22 through July 24. The cost is \$50.00 for student activity fee and tuition.

Students must have completed at least their junior year in college to qualify for credit. Theological students, sociology majors, and students who will give a year to evangelism on a subsistence basis will be given preference.

Two hours of college and seminary credit may be provided through Garrett Biblical Institute in Evanston, Illinois.

Students will live and work in St. Paul's Methodist Church and serve in the near north side and in the Negro community of Chicago's south side. One day each week will be spent at Garrett in seminar sessions. This five-week project will give special emphasis to evangelism.

WORLD METHODIST CONVOCATION

In connection with the world-wide Methodist evangelistic program this year, a World Convocation on Evangelism is scheduled to be held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, June 26-28. This will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the birth of John Wesley. It is sponsored by the Committee of Fifty, set up by the 1952 General Conference.

Plans are being made for guest preachers from all parts of the nation to speak in 500 churches in the Philadelphia area during the convocation. The city's Academy of Music will be the scene of Friday's and Saturday's programs, and on Sunday a mass meeting will be held at Franklin Field in Philadelphia.

Information for this section should reach the office of *The Pastor* at least six weeks before the event or conference is scheduled to take place, and as far in advance as possible.—Ed.

April 5—Easter.

April 6—Annual meeting of the Radio and Film Commission, Nashville, Tenn.

April 7-10—Annual meeting of the Board of Education, Nashville, Tenn.

April 8-10—Annual meeting of the Board of Evangelism, Nashville, Tenn.

April 7-10—Executive Committee of the Board of Lay Activities, Nashville, Tenn.

April 17-26—Southeastern Jurisdictional United Evangelistic Mission (First Phase).

April 21-22—South Central Jurisdictional Town and Country Seminar, Lakeview Assembly, Palestine, Tex.

April 28-30—South Central Jurisdictional Recreation Workshop, Turner Falls, Okla.

April 28-May 1—Annual meeting of the Council of Bishops, Omaha, Nebr.

May 1-10—Southeastern Jurisdictional United Evangelistic Mission (Second Phase).

May 3-10—National Family Week.

May 5-6—Board of Social and Economic Relations meets in Chicago, Ill.

May 10—Rural Life Sunday.

May 10—Festival of the Christian Home (Mother's Day).

May 14—Ascension Day.

May 24—Whitsunday (Pentecost); Aldersgate Day in The Methodist Church.

May 30—Memorial Day.

May 31—Trinity Sunday.

June 1-6—Northeastern Jurisdictional Recreation Workshop, Byndenwood, Pa.

June 8-July 9—First term Supply Pastors' School (South Central Jurisdiction), Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

June 15-19—National School of Alcohol Education for Youth, sponsored jointly by Board of Temperance and Board of Education.

June 26-28—World Methodist Convocation on Evangelism, commemorating the 250th anniversary of John Wesley, Philadelphia, Pa.

June 29-July 3—School of Alcohol Studies and Christian Action for Adults, Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa.

THE CHURCH'S ADVANCE

(From a recent statement from the Board of Missions, The Methodist Church)

Since unification The Methodist Church has written a remarkable story of achievement and expansion. The Crusade for Christ, providentially launched in 1944, enabled the church to perform a vital ministry to a war-stricken world. The Advance for Christ and His Church, begun in 1948, made it possible for the church further to extend its mission of redemption. In this new quadrennium, retrenchment would be a tragedy and would invite disaster.

The General Conference of 1952 continued the Advance as the spearhead of our missionary enterprise. We Methodists are summoned to meet our opportunities and obligations in . . . specific ways:

1. In order that the church may fulfill its great commission, every congregation is urged to meet its World Service apportionment in full. This is basic to the on-going program of the church.

2. It is imperative that the program of Advance Specials be continued. They provided the means for the missionary outreach of the church during the last quadrennium, and they are indispensable as we face the task ahead. At the present time general Advance Specials and the Week of Dedication offerings support nearly one-third of our home work, nearly one-half of our foreign work, and a much larger proportion of our over-seas relief. If our world-wide missionary program is to be continued without recession, every church will need to give at least as much to general Advance Specials this quadrennium as it did last. . . .

Every annual conference is confronted with urgent church extension needs. We are confident that our people will respond to these necessities and will provide houses of worship for the new and developing communities that dot the American scene. The Board expresses the hope that every annual conference will, as requested by the General Conference, set aside 10 per cent of conference Advance Specials for the work of the Home Division in distinctly home missionary fields. . . .

VOCATIONS DIRECTORY

The booklet *Methodist Service Projects* for 1953 is now being distributed. Issued by the Interboard Committee on Christian Vocations, the booklet is a directory of opportunities for service offered by The Methodist Church through its general boards, commissions, and other agencies. Participating

in the project are the boards of Education, Evangelism, Missions, World Peace, Hospitals and Homes; the commissions on Chaplains and Public Relations; the theological schools; and The Methodist Publishing House.

"At this time of world crisis The Methodist Church needs consecrated and qualified personnel," it is stated in the booklet. "There are pastorates without adequately trained ministers, schools needing teachers, churches seeking in vain for directors of Christian education, settlements short of social workers, hospitals needing doctors, nurses, and administrators. Overseas, in the face of unprecedented need and opportunity, we find services held up and advance blocked because there are too few workers."

Richard G. Belcher, secretary of the Interboard Committee, calls attention to the fact that this year the booklet is free but that there will not be a general mailing to pastors as has been done for the past several years. A wise and careful use of the booklet is suggested by the Committee in order to avoid waste and to insure good results.

Copies of *Methodist Service Projects* may be obtained from the Interboard Committee on Christian Vocations, Post Office Box 871, Nashville, Tennessee.

RALLY DAY PROGRAM

The Church School Rally Day program for 1953 is now available, it has been announced by Walter Towner, director of the Department of General Church School Work, Methodist Board of Education.

Written by Miss Virginia Henry of the staff of the Board's Division of the Local Church, the program is designed to emphasize the importance of Christian education and to induce Methodists to contribute to the work of their conference boards of education, as it affects Christian education in the local church.

The name of the program is "Take a Look"—at the accomplishments of Christian education as well as its need for expansion. Every effort has been made to make the program a means of promoting the effectiveness of our church schools and stimulating the offering on this day, which goes to the conference board of education for work in its local church division, it was said.

Last year the Rally Day offering was \$344,883, an increase of \$16,000 over the offering for 1951.

Order "Take a Look" by Virginia Henry (8290-BC) from your nearest branch of The Methodist Publishing House. Prices are: 10 cents each; 75 cents per dozen; \$5.00 per hundred.

APPORTIONMENTS ARE SLOW

With less than one-third of the fiscal year remaining, Methodists still have a little more than half of their annual apportionment to World Service to raise before May 31.

Figures released at the end of January by Thomas B. Lugg of Chicago, treasurer, showed an eight-month total receipts of \$4,682,879.19. World Service apportionment for the year is \$9,660,000. Even so, the total receipts for the eight-month period are 9 per cent more than during the same period last fiscal year.

January receipts for World Service totaled \$773,813.84, a drop from the \$842,025.59 reported for the first month in 1952.

World Service specials totaled \$63,994.27 for the eight months since June 1st of last year—a 2 per cent gain over the same period in the previous fiscal year.

The General Advance fund dropped off 7 per cent, with January receipts amounting to \$322,765.80 in contrast to \$362,780.69 reported in January, 1952.

Other January receipts were:

Episcopal Fund	\$85,190.42
Fellowship of Suffering and Service	44,845.14
Week of Dedication	5,917.90
General Administration	36,631.26
Interdenominational Cooperation Fund	23,294.30

HOSPITALS AND HOMES

The Board of Hospitals and Homes, 740 Rush Street, Chicago, Ill., has announced publication of two new brochures which will be of general interest to pastors and laymen alike.

"Housemothering as a Christian Career" describes the need, qualifications, and existing opportunities for both men and women to serve as houseparents. It is written by Victor B. Hann, superintendent of Methodist Home for Children in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.

Another publication, an addition to the popular Good Health Series issued by the Board, is Helen Toner's thought-provoking "Meeting Life's Wrenching Changes." This is one of the most effective pieces of literature in the entire series, and should prove to be a substantial guide to personal adjustment. Miss Toner, a Methodist minister and free-lance writer, has had articles published in nationally distributed magazines, and her booklet issued by the Board is particularly interesting.

PEACE AND SLAVERY

EDITOR. There is untold truth in the position of Loyd F. Worley ["A Christian Approach to Peace," Jan.] when he says that we want to maintain the principle of freedom. As over against the opposite principle of order, every person aware of his evangelical heritage ought to know where he stands.

I am wondering, however, if the principle of order does not at times masquerade in some of our yeasty yearnings after "peace"? Brother Worley, perhaps wisely, enjoins us as evangelical Protestants to "maintain the principle of freedom in economic and political experimentation when such practice does not conflict with basic and universal human rights."

Yet, perhaps Brother Worley does not speak wisely. No little part of the entire problem of "peace" hinges right here. What is meant by this term "experimentation"? Are you simply "experimenting" with the principle of freedom when, in the course of your "experimentation," in the very application of yourself to the "experiment," you implement procedures which not only deny "basic and universal rights" but deny the validity of the freedom with which you are carrying on the supposed "experimentation"?

If "peace" is all we want, . . . it seems to me the East-West war can be brought to a close tomorrow. All we have to do is to give up our radical principle of freedom, quietly submit to the principle of order—either in its blatant Marxist form or in its surreptitious, liberal (Worleyian) form—and, bless your soul, we'll sure have "peace." And, we'll have slavery as well!

WILL-MATTHIS DUNN, *Central Methodist Church, Austin, Tex.*

ORTHODOX READER RESPONDS

EDITOR. As one of your many subscribers, and especially as a priest of the Greek Orthodox Church here in America, I want to express my sincere appreciation to you and to Gillet Bechtel for his thought-provoking article on liturgies in the Greek Orthodox Church [Jan., p. 22].

Trusting and hoping that this is only the beginning of a series of articles on the Greek Orthodox Church, I remain.

FATHER S. J. ANTHONY, *Aliquippa, Pa.*

DIFFICULT; NOT WANTING

EDITOR. The recent articles by Ralph L. Roy [Oct., Nov. & Dec., 1952] were excellent and were greatly appreciated. You are doing a real service by publishing such information as appeared in these articles.

In addition, thank you for the articles in December's issue by J. Edward Carothers and Woodrow Geier which, in my opinion, soundly refute C. Stanley Lowell's position as seen in his article, "Let's Bury the Corpse" [Sept., 1952]. For a responsible man like Lowell to write so shallowly and irresponsibly is amazing to me. The life-centered material has *not* been tried and found wanting; it has been tried and found difficult! But it is the very best approach we have and as pastors we need to help our people in the use of it, not say, "Let's bury it."

JAMES W. MARSHALL, *Embury Methodist Church, Little Silver, N. J.*

LIKES PREACHING MATERIALS

EDITOR. Please let me extend heartiest congratulations to you for the excellent issue of February, just received. The materials in this issue read more like the Methodism that would please Wesley himself, were he here today.

I particularly liked the sermon by Buchanan. The articles by Ellis and Mills were also much enjoyed. . . .

P. S. Concerning Roy's article, "Methodism's Malcontents," in answer to which I wrote you my reaction: Could you let me know the ratio of replies you have received as "pro" or "con"?

JOHN E. DAVIS, JR., *Sandy Lake Methodist Church, Sandy Lake, Pa.*

(Note: "Pro," two to one.—Ed.)

THE LOVE OF PREACHING

EDITOR. Ezra Ellis' article on "The Romance of Preaching" [Feb., p. 8] evokes mixed response in me. On the one hand, I am frankly envious of a man who gets as much thrill as he seems to out of preaching. After sweating through a sermon's preparation and stumbling through its delivery, I am quick to admit my envy of a man who does these things with such obvious relish and gusto.

On the other hand, the article troubles me. I have an uneasy feeling about preachers who love preaching (as I have about politicians who love political office). Had Jesus been asked, "Do

you love your preaching?" what would he have answered? My guess: "That question has never occurred to me. Is it not really irrelevant in the face of the urgency of what needs to be said?"

Or take the prophets. It is hard to hear any of them saying, "I love preaching." What one does hear is, "Woe is me! God has appointed me to preach to his people, and I can do no other. But if God would take his hand off me, I'd prefer to go back to tending sheep in Tekoa." What gives power to the prophet's words is his own struggle against the God who has put them in his mouth. The hearer senses the power of the word which overwhelms even the reluctant speaker.

I don't want to equate my own feeling of awkwardness in the pulpit with prophetic urgency. I am afraid it has other, less noble roots. But I am uneasy about the widely held assumption that joy in preaching is a value in itself, some kind of goal toward which the young minister ought to look. . . .

Perhaps I could sum up this way: If a minister finds that he loves preaching, blessings on him. If he begins to talk about loving it, I get very uneasy.

ROBERT E. ELLIOTT, *Bethel Methodist Church, Chicago, Ill.*

(Note: for the record, we asked Ezra Ellis to "talk" about his preaching.—Ed.)

LOCAL CHURCH INITIATIVE

EDITOR. It is altogether possible that the legislation at the 1952 General Conference, making mandatory the organization of the leadership personnel of the local church into four commissions with definitely outlined functions and duties, will prove among the most influential passed in a long, long while. . . .

The pastor in this system can encourage the timid, spark the sluggish, and slow up, if need be, the overenthusiastic and thus prevent centralization into the hands of too few members the work of the local church. To bury in the middle of a commission the name of a brother or sister who wants always to be first in all things will be beneficial to him or to her, and certainly to other less willing workers.

This reform was overdue, too, since The Methodist Church, following the trend of the times (1932-48), gradually, through its bishops and boards came to rely on overhead supervision, not to

THE LIGHT OF THE SOUL---Voltaire

say in some instances dictation, to carry on its larger interests. This tendency was necessarily augmented by the problems arising out of the Union of 1939.

Now we are happily in a position to re-emphasize the paramount importance of independence in the work of the local church, so far as methods and means of achieving its goals are concerned, under the framework of connectivism, to which Methodism has ever been committed.

Too, often in the past three quadrenniums, we have depended upon overmanned General Conference commissions and boards, ably seconded by annual conference leaders, to tell us not only what to do in the local church but just how and when to do it. Just as in government our public servants and the people whom they serve have looked to Washington and our state capitols for hand-me-down programs, so have we too often done likewise, as pastors and people, in our local churches.

We believe our wisest leaders, the bishops of our church, will wholeheartedly welcome a wider diffusion of authority and leadership such as this new legislation envisions.

D. B. HORTON, *Elgin Methodist Church, Elgin, Okla.*

COGENT ARTICLE

EDITOR. I want to congratulate you and Myron M. Hall on presenting the cogent article "Preaching in the Divided Chancel" [Feb., p. 16].

No doubt it will provoke controversy and stimulate a healthy examination of the place of the preacher in the church and in preaching.

ROBERT M. BRASHARES, *Community Methodist Church, Van Nuys, Calif.*

TOOLS

EDITOR. . . . I greatly fear that it is you and not the advertising executive who misses the point as you indicated in your writing [Slants on the Religious, Feb., p. 1]. The process of applying to church work intelligent practical methods of carrying out the Lord's business is not watering down the gospel message; it is not a matter of "simply to make us feel more at home in this world as it is." It is an attempt to take the "Good News" from its ivory tower of being preached to the eighty-year-old "pillars" and move it down to the

mass of people (without taking out the prophetic note or any other part). . . .

The modern methods and systems of reaching large numbers of people have proven themselves extremely successful over and over again. That is why they have been used by organizations that must produce or get forced out. Do I have to point out the tobacco use today, soap selling, or political campaigns and other such changes brought about by these modern systems? Our executive must know these programs and seems to be attempting to use them. These programs have such far-reaching effects as to make our pulpit pounding and ministerial calling seem archaic to the point of being ridiculous and stupid. It would be extremely funny if the results were not so important. . . .

I am always reading advice to the effect that I should preach to the problems of the congregation. . . . All good preachers would agree here, I'm sure. But how do I know what message my people need? I can use the time honored methods of being close to my people; pastoral calling, etc. But somehow I can't justify endless hours of walking and talking when Mr. Executive can get for me the same information, with probably better accuracy, in a short time and at much less effort.

This is not to say that one survey is the answer to what a minister should preach. But it is a tool. It indicates, also, a vast number of splendid and proven tools that we can use to find out about our people, to reach them, and to change them. Not to use these tools is a head-in-the-sand act of a most foolish kind.

ALAN M. ANDERSON, *Community Methodist Church, Tremonton, Utah.*

ALWAYS WORTH READING

EDITOR. Congratulations upon another splendid issue of THE PASTOR! This (February) issue contains a number of significant articles. I should like to mention particularly "Wanted—a Doctrine of The Church" by Edward Laird Mills.

Dr. Mills has a keen analytical mind, and a literary style that is exceptional. Anything he writes is always worth reading. It seems to me that his present article is peculiarly worthy of wide and thoughtful reading.

CORLISS P. HARGRAVES, *Methodist Board of Education, Nashville, Tenn.*

LET US PRAY

EDITOR. [Regarding] the February number of THE PASTOR under "The Counselor's Workshop," page 13, I would like to state that I have found in three years of counseling that a sincere, heartfelt, sympathetic prayer helps in many ways. We certainly believe in God; let us act like we do.

J. HARVEY BROWN, *Ypsilanti, Mich.*

OBSTACLE TO EVANGELISM

EDITOR. The sermon by George Buchanan, "The Peril of Half-Hearted Religion" [Feb., p. 9], seems to me to hit the nail pretty well on the head: a truer description of our organized church life today than we like to admit.

The quoted statement from Hugh Thomas Kerr, Jr., that a "growing suspicion on the part of many that somehow the church as it now exists is in fact an obstacle to evangelism," if it is true, ought to send the church to its knees from the top leaders on down to the most lowly, until we all are endued with power from on high. Nothing less than this can save the world situation or the church either, it seems to me.

"The Romance of Preaching" by Ezra Ellis [Feb., p. 8] is also tops and challenges one anew.

WESLEY M. FRANK, *Kossuth County Inter Church Council, Lone Rock, Iowa.*

QUESTIONS PROPRIETY

EDITOR. The caption over your department of letters to the Editor, "Liberty of thought is the light of the soul," expresses the commendable principle of freedom of speech. However, I question the propriety of a Christian journal utilizing the words of such an outspoken antichristian deist. Voltaire was so prejudiced against religion that the Archbishop of Paris refused him a Christian burial, in spite of a deathbed partial retraction of his writings.

Is it the Christian attitude to demand the "right" of freedom of speech, or is it not rather to determine to speak the truth regardless of the consequences?

May I suggest a more appropriate quotation, from one who said, "For this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth."

JOHN C. COX, *The Ellenburg Methodist Church, Ellenburg, N. Y.*

The Fountain

NEW TWIST

Suppression of free speech and free thought is recognized as only the modern successor to the religious intolerance. . . .

—Henry J. Cadbury, in *The Quaker Approach* (G. P. Putnam's Sons)

SOMETHING BIGGER

A society woman once went to consult a famous psychotherapist. He said at the first interview, "Now tell me all about yourself." She needed no second invitation. At the end of the hour the doctor said, "That will do now; I'll see you again tomorrow." The same formula was repeated several times a week for some weeks. Then one day the doctor said to his patient: "Madam, I can do no more for you now. I advise you to take the first train to Niagara Falls, and there take a long, lingering look at something bigger than yourself."

—John Trevor Davies, in *Lord of All* (Abingdon-Cokesbury Press)

GRACE FOR A SERVICE CLUB

Bless, O God, the substance that sustains our life, the sacrifice of flesh to flesh, of life to life; and grant that we who for our nourishment presume to eat of that which thou hast made, may render up to thee the sacrifice of our effective service to work thy holy will in higher realms of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Benjamin C. Few, *First Methodist Church, Paris, Ark.*

CHRIST'S COMMUNITY

It is impossible . . . to be a "man in Christ" in good and regular standing and be an absolute individualist. The importance of the Church and the interests of the Church must ever be a primary concern of every Christian. He cannot be a Christian in the fullest sense except as a member of the Christian community; he cannot fulfill his mission as a Christian and as a man unless the Church has a large place in his thinking and he finds in it an appropriate sphere for his action.

—John A. Mackay, in *God's Order; the Ephesian Letter and This Present Time* (Macmillan Co.)

WHO IS A CHRISTIAN?

Who then is a Christian, according to the light which God hath vouchsafed to this people? He that, being "justified by faith, hath peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" and, at the same time, is "born again," "born from above," "born of the Spirit"; inwardly changed from the image of the devil, to that "image of God wherein he was created"; he that finds the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him; and whom this love sweetly constrains to love his neighbour, every man, as himself; he that has learned of his Lord to be meek and lowly in heart, and in every state to be content: he in whom is that whole mind, all those tempers, which were also in Christ Jesus: he that abstains from all appearance of evil, in his actions; and that offends not with his tongue: he that walks in all the commandments of God, and in all his

ordinances, blameless: he that, in all his intercourse with men, does to others as he would they should do to him; and in his whole life and conversation, whether he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he doeth, doeth all to the glory of God.

—John Wesley, *Works* (1831), ii, 390; selected by Virgil Kraft, Chicago, Ill.

OUR ATTITUDES

Attitudes are important to Jesus. One must live in society with the attitude of goodwill by which the individual is to be dynamically related to all other human beings. It is a primary obligation of the Kingdom citizen to show goodwill, and he is responsible for creating the conditions of goodwill. Only those who show mercy—active goodwill—can expect to obtain it. Goodwill also requires the recognition of the good in others.

—H. Ralph Higgins, in *Christianity and America's Social Problems* (Comet Press Books)

FREEDOM TO THINK

Society itself must look at the school as less of a place where predetermined truths are taught to the youth, and more of a place where the young are led to discover for themselves the values of life which seem to be valid and capable of standing the tests of experience. This is by no means the idea that many people have of the school today, and those who attempt to live by the more liberal, critical formula are apt to find themselves in difficulty, because they will be accused of not being loyal to those truths which the members of the dominant groups in society think should be inculcated.

—Roscoe L. West, in *American Education and Religion* (Harper & Brothers)

TRY A CAREFUL READING

The Beatitudes are not the substitution of the second commandment of love for one's neighbour for the first of love for God. The extraordinary notion that the Sermon on the Mount contains simple moral precepts detached from theological complications, could surely not survive one attentive reading of it. It is full of theological presuppositions. In the Christian scheme of things, and in reality, love of the Father and love of His children are not to be separated.

—Hugh Martin, in *The Beatitudes* (Harper & Brothers)

WHY FOUR GOSPELS?

Some persons are convinced that native peoples should have the Scriptures, but they seem to see no good reason at all for giving all four Gospels. Some even question the providence of God and the historical decisions of the Church in preserving these four accounts, of which three—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—are so similar. The missionary translator, however, has reason to see in practical experience the value of these different depictions of our Lord. For the Mohammedan world the popular Gospel is Matthew, for there in the first verse is Abraham; and there follows immediately a genealogy, which gives Jesus the distinction and importance that such a person should have, as far as Mohammedans are concerned. For the semi-Christianized person of Roman Catholic background, who has often heard much more about Mary than about the Son of God, the book of Luke is an

introduction which leads from true reverence for Mary to the worship of Him who redeemed mankind and stands as the only mediator between God and man. For the philosophical Hindu or Buddhist the Gospel of John frequently strikes fire, for here is a point of contact, and the Word of God begins to live. For the native of most aboriginal societies, the best book is Mark, which has no difficult genealogy (as do Matthew and Luke), no series of Old Testament allusions (as in the beginning of Luke), and no philosophic declarations (as "In the beginning was the Word"). Here in Mark is the story of a man who was baptized, recognized by God, and then submitted to temptation—a story which moves quickly into the realm of all men's understanding.

—Eugene A. Nida, in *God's Word in Man's Language*, (Harper & Brothers)

APPLE CART OF PROGRESS

In the age when [the] cult of Inevitable Progress was flourishing it was hard to pray *thy kingdom come* in the Christian way at all. Frankly, many of us did not want a sudden divine intervention, to say nothing of the divine catastrophe of the End. All was going well with us, or so we thought. A divine catastrophe would be only the upsetting of a well-loaded apple cart.

—Carroll E. Simcox, in *Living the Lord's Prayer* (Morehouse-Gorham Co.)

WHOSE JOKE?

From Europe it is easy to understand the religious nature of the American belief in innocence and achievement; to see how even the most vulgar products of "mass culture," movies, comic books, sub-literary novels are the scriptures of this post-Christian faith—a faith that has already built up in Western Europe a sizeable underground sect which worships in the catacombs of the movie theaters and bows before the images of its saints on the news-stands. A hundred years after the *Manifesto*, the specter that is haunting Europe is—Gary Cooper! Vulgar, gross, sentimental, impoverished in style—our popular sub-art presents a dream of human possibilities to starved imaginations everywhere. It is a wry joke that what for us are the most embarrassing by-products of a democratic culture, are in countries like Italy the only democracy there is.

—Leslie A. Fielder, in *America and the Intellectuals* (Partisan Review Series, IV)

SERMON IDEAS

Some preachers know how to keep an intricate filing system so that every reference is under its proper heading. I have never found such a system that was not a worry to me, and since I cannot work when worried, I have let it go. But there are three things which seem to me to be minimum requirements for our long-range sermon preparation. First, keep a notebook in which you can jot down the idea, the quotation, or the illustration that you discover. If it can be clipped, so much the better, though I could never bring myself to tear pages out of books. Much fine material becomes merely vague to us if we depend on remembering it. Second, keep a folder in which every idea for a sermon or every outline of a sermon may be placed. With such a storehouse, no man need face a week, or a year, desperately seeking something that will strike fire. He will always find enough and to spare. Third, plan your preaching at least one year in advance. I have learned that taking time in my summer holidays to plan next year's preaching pays as big dividends as any investment I can make.

—Gerald Kennedy, in *Here Is My Method* (Fleming H. Revell Co.)

THE PLOT

The whole story of the Bible (for it is in effect *one story*, however much our over-analytical study of it may tend to obscure the unity) from the fall of the first Adam to the coming of the Second Adam in the person of Jesus Christ and to His final return in glory to judge the living and the dead—the whole story of the Bible is the story of how God's plan to bring about the redemption and the new birth of sinful man has been and is being carried out.

—R. V. G. Tasker, in *The Narrow Way* (Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship)

WRONG APPRAISAL

Opposed to the gospel of security, and especially to that form of it which is linked with largesse from the state, is the goal so often hailed in our youth and still so influential, that of success. As a matter of fact, the supposed antithesis of social security on the one hand and individual success on the other is itself a sign of our confusion. Even on the economic plane the parts played respectively by society and the individual are not always easy to define. Much of what an individual is assumed to do for himself is actually done for him by society. How, then, do we know what lies back of success, or of what success consists? If the kind of security we seek is impossible, the kind of success we extol is in part a sham. The truth is that our students gain from us a wrong appraisal and a false goal. To have "success" in the ordinary meaning of the word will not prepare them for adversity because so much of the time it comes as a result of shrewdness rather than wisdom.

—Julius Seelye Bixler, in *Education for Adversity* (Howard University Press)

TWO ERRORS

Theological liberalism is an arrogant attempt to see "Jesus Himself," without being led to this view by the Apostles. Theological orthodoxy, on the other hand, disclaims the right to try to "see" Him for oneself at all; it simply accepts the authority of the Church, or of the Bible, and on the strength of that accepts the Apostolic doctrine, apart from personal conviction altogether. Liberalism is a mistaken autonomy; it consists in the failure to grasp the fact that apart from the witnesses to the Resurrection we cannot see Jesus at all, as He really is. Orthodoxy is a mistaken heteronomy, which substitutes faith in the witness of the Apostles, and thus faith in the authority of Scripture, for personal faith in Jesus Himself. But God wills that we ourselves should be witnesses to Christ, that we should see Him Himself, and to this end He gives us both the historical picture and the testimony of the Apostles, in order that through both we may come to see Him for ourselves.

—Emil Brunner, in *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption* (Westminster Press)

FOR DISCIPLES ONLY

The New Testament nowhere provides a collection of detailed rules to guide the disciple every step of his way. It does not attempt to show how he is to behave in every imaginable set of circumstances. Instead, it sets before us the One who entered history in the form of a servant, and by telling the story of Jesus—his baptism, his temptation, his preaching, his works of healing, his prayers, his attitude to the outcasts of society, his relations to his disciples, his relations to the religious and political authorities of his time, his passion, his death, his exaltation—it gives the all-sufficient example by which the disciple is to live.

—F. W. Dillistone, in *Jesus Christ and His Cross* (Westminster Press)

Browsing Through Recent Fiction

A Review by GERALD KENNEDY



SOMETIME ago a friend gave me a book that I fully expected to read immediately. Somehow it was pushed aside and did not come to my attention again until just a few weeks ago. It was written by Stewart Holbrook and entitled *Lost Men of American History*. There is a section in it on Horatio Alger, Jr., who turned out over a hundred yarns, all dealing with the same theme: a poor boy, through hard work and a few fortunate breaks, achieves business success, wealth, and usually the hand of the boss's daughter in marriage.

Holbrook, interestingly enough, links up Alger with the economic theory of *laissez faire*. That is, he suggests that this kind of writing was the perfect expression of that philosophy, and its popularity is to be accounted for on the basis that it gave the people what they wanted to believe.

It is probably true that the majority of novels simply reflect the popular thought of the day. Now and again a great book will mold the mind of the public and set the direction for the future. These books are very rare, however, and for the most part novelists are men of their time reflecting the strength and weakness of the contemporary situation. This is why men who are aware of social responsibility need to read novels.

It is very dangerous to define trends. For once a person gets an idea, it is too easy to emphasize all that supports his thesis and ignore all that denies it. I cannot help feeling, however, that the new novels are reflecting a more serious and profound attitude toward life. It seems to me that during these last few years I have found much more modern fiction to challenge my thought and less tendency to skim lightly over insignificant themes. There are more novels that are quotable in the pulpit. At least, each one of the books I want to discuss briefly this time has won respect and escaped scorn.

Sironia, Texas

I began this huge novel with some trepidation on account of its size and its reputation. The main thing being said about it was that it is the longest novel ever written by an American, filling over seventeen hundred pages. While this is no mean achievement, one does not weigh literature by the pound or measure it by the bulk. I had not read very far in it when I found myself more impressed with its quality than its quantity. This seems to me to be a major achievement in the realm of American fiction.

It tells the story of a Texas town through the experiences of a few families. It is fiction in the grand style and comes nearer achieving a status equal to "Tom Jones" (in Henry Fielding's, *History of Tom Jones*) than any recent book which comes to mind. I feel like a citizen of Sironia and found the town not unlike some of the places where I have lived. The writer has the novelist's chief gift, which is to make his characters real and his portrayal of life dramatic.

The proof of the book's excellence lies in the fact that I could not skip any of it. Some of us have learned to move through most novels very rapidly, and it was somewhat disturbing to find that every page had writing that to skip, meant to lose something essential. I read nearly every word in this long book because the writer has taken pains enough to make his words important. In the most unexpected places he reveals an insight or a flash of bright light into a dark situation. Great art, whether it be a cathedral or a painting, always impresses me with the fine attention the artist has given to every small part, and that is characteristic of this novel.

There are some tremendous assumptions here concerning the race problem in the South, but not once is there a suggestion of a moral being drawn or a sermon being preached. On the contrary, the whole book has a sense of

truth which rests on the nature of men and life, without any contriving being necessary on the part of the author.

Yes, there is a good deal of sex in it. But I must confess that it never seemed to me to be brought in for effect but grew out of the nature of the people involved and the social environment. There are humorous touches that made me break into unconfined and unrefined laughter, much to my wife's annoyance. I must not go farther, except to say that in my judgment this is a book which will have real literary stature in the eyes of the critics many decades from now.

The Sinner of Saint Ambrose

The story is of that period which witnessed the breakup of the Roman Empire and the beginnings of the Holy Catholic Church. The sinner of Saint Ambrose is a young pagan who can never escape the influence of one of the early bishops of the church. In the midst of the lust of the pagan society, Augustine plays his part, but is not as sympathetically portrayed as is usually the case.

This is a good book, and whatever message it desires to deliver comes with more smoothness and artistry than is usually the case in such novels. Most of the historical background struck me as fairly sound. The relationship of the barbarian tribes to the Roman Empire is particularly clear. Change the names and the customs and you have a fair picture of what has been going on in Washington in these recent days. Can a dying civilization be saved? Not when the integrity of the individual has been corrupted.

Giant

This is Texas month in this department. Over half of the fiction reading I have done this time has been in two books—really three books, if you count Sironia's two volumes—dealing with our biggest state. Edna Ferber has stirred up more Texas criticism than has

Cooper, for she implies that the great state of the Southwest has gone in more for size than quality. It suggests that being a Texan is more or less a role one learns to play. Miss Ferber probes the uneasy relationship between Anglos and Latins.

To an outsider it would appear that the criticism in the novel is rather gentle and without malice. Personally I always have a wonderful time in Texas and enjoy the people, the culture, and the land. The bigness is an inevitable part of it all and, without the assumption that there is no other place in the world comparable, Texas would not be Texas. This is a hard book to lay down once you get started, and for all of us who know that none of us are perfect, some interesting comments on human foibles may be observed.

The Velvet Doublet

If you want to read about a legendary hero from the point of view of a man who never liked him, this is for you. Through the eyes of Juan Rodrigo Bermejo of Triana, we see the voyages of Columbus to the new world and we see the kind of man the "Admiral of the Ocean Sea" was, at last in one man's eyes. Accordingly he is characterized as a charlatan and a cheat. Yet there shines through these poor qualities a kind of greatness in spite of it all, for Columbus was a man with tremendous faith in himself and a vision which forbade any doubt.

This is one of James Street's best. I like him much better when he is writing about Rodrigo than when he is describing the fortunes of a Baptist preacher. I do not mean to imply that I prefer one character over the other, but only that the author can tell about a fifteenth-century sailor with a flourish and a style, while his attempt to portray a twentieth-century Protestant preacher limps. This is a judgment of course which not all will accept. But leaving out the debate on the relative merits of this author's works, I feel safe in recommending *The Velvet Doublet* as an adventure tale with a fine swing and rhythm.

House of Earth

Dorothy Wilson took a trip recently to India and among other things obtained background material for a religious novel. It is a story of the effect of Christianity on an ancient culture. In particular, it tells about a missionary's influence on a boy and his success in converting him to Christianity. You can never escape the feeling that this

is a kind of missionary tract with a message. It is in some sense a sermon clothed in fictional form.

It can be recommended to young people and to Christians who would like some Christian propaganda in the form of a good story. Let me not be considered supercilious in my attitude. This is a much better job than is usually done in this field, and Mrs. Wilson has shown us that she has real fictional gifts in this and other books. I must tell you however that, in my judgment, the story is secondary to the message, and that is not the sign of great fiction.

LOST MEN OF AMERICAN HISTORY, by Stewart Holbrook. Macmillan Co., 370 pp., \$4.

SIRONIA, TEXAS, by Madison Cooper. Houghton-Mifflin Co., 2 volumes, \$10.

THE SINNER OF SAINT AMBROSE, by Robert Reynolds. Bobbs-Merrill Co., 443 pp., \$3.75

GIANT, by Edna Ferber. Doubleday & Co., 447 pp., \$3.95

THE VELVET DOUBLET, by James Street. Doubleday & Co., 351 pp., \$3.50

HOUSE OF EARTH, by Dorothy Clarke Wilson. Westminster Press, 309 pp., \$3.50

THE *Westminster* PRESS

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By **EMIL BRUNNER**. Dr. Brunner argues that the true Church—the *ecclesia* of the New Testament—has been wrongly identified with the "churches" as we know them today. He shows why the future of the Christian Church depends on its return to the true *ecclesia* as a community of persons in Christ. \$2.50

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At all bookstores, WESTMINSTER PRESS, Phila. 7

Principle of Faith

IN THIS NAME, by Claude Welch.
Charles Scribner's Sons, 313 pp.,
\$3.50

This book is a study in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity in contemporary theology. The writers considered have all done their work since 1918. Christian ministers who wish to clarify their thinking on the subject will find this study very helpful.

Welch maintains that the doctrine of the Trinity is the "supreme principle of the faith" and that it is of first-rank importance. In view of this fact it is disappointing that the author has not included a rough outline of the early history of this doctrine and a résumé of one classic statement thereof.

From the fourth to the nineteenth centuries this doctrine, Dr. Welch holds, was the keystone of Christian thought. After the coming of literary criticism of the gospels and the theology of Schleiermacher, the doctrine of the Trinity was reduced to a much lower rank in Protestant theology. In authoritarian and fundamentalist circles the doctrine held its traditional place. Hegel's philosophical attempt to restore this doctrine to the forefront failed.

Karl Barth, whose commentary on Romans was published in 1918, has reversed the modern trend. "... it may be affirmed," writes Welch, "that in the main stream of contemporary theological development there is a strong current of thought in the direction of renewed recognition of the necessity and importance of a Christian doctrine of the Trinity." The author builds up an impressive case for this point of view.

The doctrine of the Trinity is neither a rationalistic deduction from the revelation witnessed to in the New Testament, nor a defensive doctrine which has little value for preaching. This author maintains that the Trinity is an "... immediate implication of revelation." If one analyzes what is given in the New Testament, he will arrive at a trinitarian conception of God. This is the fundamental position that Karl Barth takes, and Welch follows him at this crucial point, although he is no slavish Barthian.

He insists that what we have in the New Testament is not merely a three-fold revelation of God, but a revelation

God's own being. There are three "modes of being" in the very structure of God. In the New Testament we "... apprehend God the Father in the Son through the Spirit." Welch is critical of the social conception of the Trinity.

This is a thoroughly competent study. The book is clearly outlined and well written. It is a book that every thoughtful minister will find instructive and rewarding.—*E. Jerome Johanson*

Voice of a Mediator

P. T. FORSYTH: PROPHET FOR TODAY, by Robert McAfee Brown.
Westminster Press, 191 pp., \$3.50

The resurgence of theology in America, sometimes called the new theology, is well known to seminary students and pastors alike. Starting in the thirties when the thunderous voice of Karl Barth began to be heard in a few American classrooms, the movement got its biggest boost from Reinhold Niebuhr's *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (Charles Scribner's Sons, \$5.00).

But from the beginning the movement met with stiff resistance. Among the detractors there were a few discerning critics, but not many. Many church leaders took a quick look at the hard words about man's nature (once again man was called *sinner*) and said, without further examination, "None of that pessimism for me!" The new theology's brilliant analysis of man's sin, they believed, undercut all moral effort. This prejudice kept them from discovering the positive emphases of the new theology—its theocentricity, its clamor for social justice, its passion for proclaiming the gospel.

Today the influence of the movement is far short of what it could be. Its young advocates are tired of haggling over terminology; but so important is the issue that they seem willing to try to clear up misunderstandings, whatever they are. Scores of books have already been written about the main tenets of the new theology. Several recent books speak directly to the problem of clarification; for example, Edward T. Ramsdell's *The Christian Perspective* (Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, \$2.50).

This book of Robert McAfee Brown's is no less constructive in purpose. In

his Introduction he says: "Anyone who can speak creatively [to the contemporary Protestant] . . . situation has something very important to say, particularly if he is saying the things that our generation needs to hear . . ." Brown's theological hero, English theologian P. T. Forsyth (1848-1921), possessed a straightforward style that is much easier to follow than Niebuhr's and Barth's paradoxical language. And then, too, Forsyth may reach church leaders because, while recognizing the "pervasiveness of human sin," he leaves no one in doubt as to the central affirmation of Christianity: the gift of God's grace.

Forsyth, like many another prophet, was largely ignored by his contemporaries, and only recently has he experienced a revival in England. A minister of the Congregational Church, he grew up in an environment in which the rising philosophy of immanence seemed much more in harmony with science than the biblical world-view with its God who reveals himself in dramatic historical acts. Churchmen of the time, still dizzy as a result of seeing fundamentalism fall apart under the impact of science, were willing to accommodate Christian faith to almost any popular ideology.

During his early ministry Forsyth went along with the new liberalism. He was for a while member of a church group which he urged to recognize as "members of Christ" all men "who worship the goodness of Christ." But long before the turn of the century his shift to a more solid position was complete. About his former viewpoint, he wrote: "The movement [religious liberalism] was too sentimental. It interpreted the heavenly Fatherhood by the earthly, instead of the earthly by the heavenly. . . . Its general tendency was to canonize freedom instead of an authority that makes free."

What happened to Forsyth was that he rediscovered the gospel. The witness to this good news he found in the New Testament—in the Gospels and the Pauline letters. What is it? It is an incredible grace from God to man. In Christ man can experience God's grace in the forgiveness of sins, followed by regeneration or new life. Man has an active role in the divine-human relationship. He not only is expected to "come to himself," but he is called to live dangerously in and for the kingdom.

Once the gospel is successful in challenging the stubborn will of man then, through man, it challenges culture. Forsyth's theology is through and

through social, or incarnational, in character, involving transformation of both man and culture.

Whatever the reception of Forsyth in America, his place among great theological minds is secure. If church leaders begin reading him soon, it may not be too sanguine a hope to expect an ecclesiastical enlightenment which will actually hit the grass roots. This is no doubt what Brown and other advocates of the new theology are working and praying for.—**Richard H. Rice**

Men and Ideas

THE GREAT HUMANISTS, by Lynn Harold Hough. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 220 pp., \$3.50

For many years Dean Hough has been saying that the study of human experience offers clues to a world where human intelligence is seen to be rooted in divine intelligence, where human purpose finds its source and quality in divine purpose, and where the living man finds his meaning in the living God. In the evolutionary process itself, what mind discovers there, mind must have put there.

The final end of the process, the purpose, has meaning and actual power only if it is conscious intelligence exercising dynamic energy. The great and conscious Planner is necessary to every stage of the plan. On any other terms, all life becomes a meaningless relativity, a conflict of undisciplined passions, a lust for political power that cannot criticize itself. Every purpose is completed in that final purpose in which all existence finds its meaning.

The following words, which Hough uses to describe Cicero, actually describe Hough: "... nothing seems to escape his mind. . . . there is a great strength and firmness back of even the most facile and pliable phrases. . . . Through every coiling and twisting turn of circumstances he is loyal to the great purpose. He can express the warmest appreciation. He can use the most subtle satire. You feel all the while the range of his mind, the fullness of his knowledge, and his shrewd sagacity. He made himself felt as a cosmopolitan gentleman, easily at home with the affairs of all the world."

Always Hough sees, and enables his readers or hearers to see, that the greatest human tragedy is man's betrayal of his humanity. Like Erasmus, Hough has set himself the task of making learning Christian and, if possible, of making Christians learned or, if not learned, urbane. Law for man, and law

REVIEWERS

JACK ANDERSON, pastor of Wesley Monumental Methodist Church, Savannah, Ga.

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MYRON F. WICKE, associate director of Higher Education, Methodist Board of Education.

for man *under God*, have always been distinct to him from the modern all-inclusive law for things. Growth in perfection—man's business—is growth in restraint, not growth in the lawless stream of furious emotion.

This writer spent four years attending Hough seminars in Drew University. For my money, *The Christian Criticism of Life* (Abingdon-Cokesbury, \$2.50) and *The Meaning of Human Experience* (Abingdon-Cokesbury, \$3.) are possibly richer books than this, but here is a kind of essential summary of Hough's chief loves, both in men and in ideas. Hough did much for me; and he is still doing it. I think he taught me, in Pelagius' words: "If you ought, you can." This book contains among its portraits, drawn with love, essentially the same message.

American Christianity needs many things. One of the greatest of its needs, obviously, is humanism: the dignity and responsibility of man, over nature and under God—the great stream of men and ideas through the ages, the best that has been thought and said. Our American preaching is usually more social than gospel, or more gospel than social, and in either case uncritically enthusiastic. Hough is the voice of Christian restraint, of proportion, of awareness of the greater voices, of decisiveness on the significant issues.

For myself, I would appreciate more quotes from the men he treats—Aristotle, Cicero, Erasmus, Babbitt, Paul Elmer More—and fewer sweeping gen-

eralities, or sweeping particularities. At times I feel that the book is a series of homilies rather than studies of masters. No doubt the fault is mine. Every writer is entitled to his own choice of method. Both Hough's form and his substance are here justified.—**David Wesley Soper**

Issues of Union

THE QUEST FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY, by Robert S. Bilheimer. Association Press, 181 pp., \$2.50

The purpose of this book is twofold. First, it is a historical summary of what has been done in the ecumenical movement thus far, particularly during the last fifty years and as it relates to the Christian community in America. Second, the author presents the issues that now confront the movement and indicates the areas in which further steps toward unity must be taken.

The book is written from the viewpoint of one who has been actively associated with the quest for unity among Christian people, but it is not the work of a propagandist for any particular form of church union or procedure. The result is a competent and concise introduction to the ecumenical movement, valuable for minister and layman alike.

The reader will find the historical section well done, though sketchy and sometimes lacking in precision. Much is packed into very few words. The account is not simply the accumulation of historical facts but contains discerning

discussion of the issues involved and the significance of the events. The final third of the book is devoted to short chapters on the major families of churches involved in the ecumenical movement, each written by a member of the respective church family.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the book is the writer's analysis of what has been done and his presentation of the issues which must now be faced. The author feels that the greatest advance thus far has been in the area of co-operation among the churches; and while he apparently does not hope for organic, transconfessional union in the foreseeable future, he rightly asks if co-operation is enough.

In addition to the differences which arise in polity and theology, the author underscores the penetration into the life of the church of the divisions of society at large, such as racial discrimination and the gulf which seems to be fixed between East and West. The word "ecumenical" is first of all spiritual, and those who take it seriously must ask themselves some searching questions about their own attitudes and practices.

—**John H. Leith**

Old Testament Biography

KINGS AND PROPHETS OF ISRAEL, by Adam C. Welch, ed. by Norman W. Porteous. *Philosophical Library*, 264 pp., \$4.75

Norman W. Porteous has performed a distinct service to biblical scholarship in editing and preserving these clear and scholarly contributions. The lectures are preceded by a memoir of the life of Adam Welch by George S. Gunn, who has written an inspiring account of the career of his teacher. The name of the book is well justified from the titles of the six lectures: "Moses in the Old Testament Tradition," "Saul," "David," "Amos," "Hosea," and "Isaiah."

Professor Welch had a mind open to the results of scientific biblical research, and we generally meet on these pages a vigorous and original method of presentation. Moses is considered as God's messenger and representative, who is assured that the deliverance of Israel is not an isolated act on God's part, but belongs to a design which will unfold itself in their history.

The writer regards Saul as a great soul with a fatal defect so that he was not quite big enough to do the thing demanded under the circumstances. In spite of a bias against David, the au-

thor aptly portrays how this king effected the political and religious unity of the nation. In the lecture on Amos we meet the biblical position that the Old Testament is not the story of man's search after God, but the record of God's approach to man.

There is a certain progression in the interest aroused as one reads this book, for it seems to improve as one proceeds in these lectures. The marriage of Hosea is accepted as a literal fact, but Gomer turned out to be a woman who could not see or could not bear the grave demands which love makes upon the moral nature. The sins of Israel all sprang from unfaithfulness to the love of God, who had given the nation everything it possessed. The sections on Hosea furnish much theological material that can be effectively used by the preacher.

It is fitting that the final lecture, that on Isaiah, is the longest in the book. Here the author brings out that sound biblical theology is based upon the proper use of the results of critical study.

To Isaiah the purpose of divine self-revelation was to redeem God's people, and accordingly God created a world, the fulness of which was his self-revelation. The prophet demanded faith, and the remnant consisted of those held together by a common conviction. In the end, faith must create new forms to fit new conditions. Welch has numerous profound insights into Old Testament theology, and this book is full of rich suggestions for preaching from the Old Testament.—**Henry S. Gehman**

The Parson at Work

THE MAN IN THE MANSE, by John Bishop. *Epworth Press (London)*, 156 pp., \$1.35

John Bishop describes his book as "A study of the life and work of the Christian minister today." He covers the entire field with fifteen chapters, from the minister and his calling to the minister as evangelist. In between are chapters on the sacraments, pastoral visiting, care of the sick and the bereaved, and counseling, as well as the study and pulpit.

In the foreword Leslie Weatherhead describes the "modest language" in which the book was "humbly" written. There is nothing pretentious about the book. It makes no big claims. It may be the difference between the British and American view of the ministry, but I found the book lacking in sharp challenge. It could have been written ten years ago and may be profitable

reading ten years hence, but it does not describe or meet the emergencies of this hour. There is much good advice in it, but today ministers want more than that.

In the chapter on books he says: "It is good for a man to get his teeth into something tough." But he does not mention any "tough" ones. In fact he does not recommend a single book in the entire chapter. I had just finished Fredrick Stamm's *So This Is Religion*, and the contrast was striking. While one might wonder why Dr. Stamm seemed so constantly irritated by the officials in his churches, he surely puts the fire under your own boiler. This I missed in *The Man in the Manse*.—**Jack Anderson**

Religion in Public Schools

AMERICAN EDUCATION AND RELIGION, ed. by F. Ernest Johnson. *Harper & Brothers*, 211 pp., \$.25

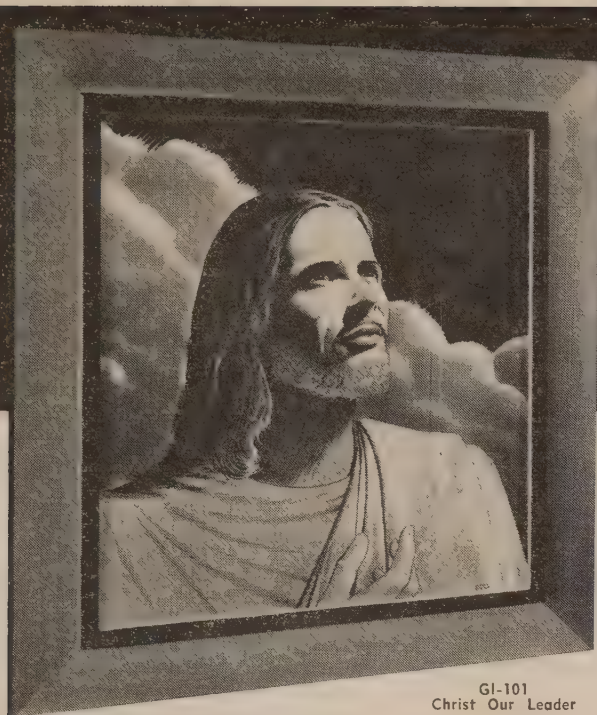
In an address before ten thousand public school teachers in 1940, Charles Clayton Morrison, then editor of *The Christian Century*, made charges that shocked and displeased many of his listeners. Among other things he said:

"The public school is confessedly and deliberately secular. I am bound, therefore, to lay on the doorstep of our educational system the prime responsibility for the decline of religion and the steady advance of secularism, another name for atheism, in American society.

"Protestant children in public schools are under an influence with which the churches cannot compete, and which they cannot counteract. The public school presents the church with a generation of youth whose minds have been cast in a secular mold."

Similar statements, as up-to-date as the latest magazine on the pastor's desk, are still bringing countercharges. The whole problem is vigorously treated in this symposium, edited with an introductory chapter and a summary of conclusions by F. Ernest Johnson, only recently retired from his research position with the National Council of Churches.

The book levels no wild accusations against the public schools, and fortunately so. Nevertheless, there is no book now in print which so adequately voices points of view of the varying groups seeking to find ways of making religion a more effective part of public and private education. And no other book more completely defines the difficulties involved.



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Everyone will be profited by the sincere statement of misgivings and hopes expressed by the vice-chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and by the forthright Roman Catholic position on education. The words of the editor should be noted here: "I wish now to pay my respects to the reverent exposition of Catholic convictions which go so deep as to enable a great Church to maintain a school system at immense cost, for conscience sake." Before anyone takes issue with this acknowledgment, he should read the Catholic statement for himself.

How can our religious heritage be given its proper place in education without doing violence to the provisions of the Constitution and to separate provisions of state constitutions? This is the real problem. The Supreme Court decision in the *Zorach* case which declared constitutional the New York released-time plan, allows a latitude not inferred from the earlier *McCullum* and *Everson* cases, as these words from the *Zorach* decision plainly indicate: "When the State encourages religious instruction or cooperates with religious authorities by adjusting the schedule of public events to sectarian needs, it follows our best traditions." Dr. Johnson

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calls especial attention to the words "cooperates" and "encourages," and the authors agree generally that constitutional provisions do not render impossible increased attention to religion in the public schools.

But there are lions in the path. There are those, for example, who regard religion as irrelevant and its teaching in any form as harmful. This point of view is discussed only slightly in this book, for the authors are without exception men and women who want the possibilities of religion to become a part of education. Nevertheless, there is much discussion of the term "secularism," and much defining. Most of us will agree that the term is today used too frequently as a convenient whipping boy, as a sort of omnibus term to include almost everything we dislike.

A more formidable difficulty, however, and one for which denominational leaders are responsible, is the problem of gaining agreement among the various confessions as to what is admissible and desirable in religious instruction in the schools.

The experiences describe by Superintendent Mathew F. Gaffney of the New Trier Township High School is illustrative of frustrations awaiting educators who seek to gain for religion its proper place in education. Dr. Gaffney discovered to his chagrin that the religious leaders of his community held that there was no religious education possible except along denominational and dogmatic lines. Most of us are already familiar with the painful efforts of the Board of Regents of the State of New York to formulate a prayer for the opening of school which could gain the approval of religious leaders.

Does this mean that there is no hope? Far from it! The symposium suggests numerous specific proposals and some successful plans now in operation. Running through it all, however, is the conviction that educators and religious leaders have a good deal of "homework" to do if they want to find ways of making religion operative in education. Most thoughtful public educators have expressed this conviction as their hope.

Thus President Henry H. Hill of George Peabody College for Teachers, writing in *The Atlantic Monthly* in October, said: "To guard against increasing tensions between public schools on the one hand and private and parochial schools on the other, there should be a united effort on the part of religious leaders to provide common agreements and sanctions for moral and spiritual values to be taught in the public schools." Probably we should add

that the "united effort" must include educational leaders as well.

American Education and Religion is a major contribution to a perplexing American problem.—**Myron F. Wicke**

Away with Denominations

THE UNFINISHED REFORMATION,
by Charles Clayton Morrison. Harper
& Brothers, 256 pp., \$3.

The Unfinished Reformation is a frontal attack on the whole denominational system of American Protestantism. Denominationalism is found to be an encumbrance and a handicap upon Protestantism, alien to the genius and the intention of the Reformers. Denominations have usurped the functions that belong to the whole church, Dr. Morrison contends; they have superimposed alien man-made structures on the true church. Ecumenical progress now demands a realistic facing and thorough repudiation of the denominational system; great spiritual gain would immediately follow.

The root of Protestant difficulty lies in the failure to distinguish properly between the two parts of the inner structure of the church, its constitution and its fellowship. The constitution is the focus of authority and loyalty, the fellowship is the locus of freedom. The author maintains that the constitution of the church is forever determined by Christ himself; in him alone and in his Lordship the church has its sole constitutional authority.

The fundamental error of Protestant denominationalism has been its usurpation of the authority of Christ; each denomination has given constitutional status to matters that Christ has left to the fellowship and has therefore invaded his jurisdiction. Even the Bible, "next to Christ the most precious possession of the Christian community," does not belong to the constitution of the church, but to its fellowship; to give it a place beside Christ "results inevitably in the obscuration of Christ's own authority, and also in the continued multiplication of sectarian churches."

With its provocative intensity, the book can hardly fail to become highly controversial. For example, Dr. Morrison has divided the denominations with respect to their "feeling-response" to the ecumenical movement into two classes: "reformist" (descendants of classic Protestantism) and "restoration-

ist" (descendants of the Anabaptists and other sectaries).

In the first category are placed the Episcopalians, Lutherans, and Presbyterians; in the second are the Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists, and Disciples. In response to the ecumenical imperative, the former can react wholeheartedly, but the latter less easily. Hence, the ecumenical movement must now deal candidly with the restorationist "delusion," and especially put to rout the "illusory, unbiblical and unchristian notion of congregational independence and autonomy."

It seems to this reviewer that such a categorization and such a conclusion can only be maintained by attention to abstract rather than to historical and practical considerations. American denominations have been so affected by the religious currents of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that the categories suggested are not adequate.

Quite clearly some of the groups classified as "restorationist" are far more committed to the ecumenical movement than some called "reformist"; he himself speaks of an "ultra-sectarian exclusivism" in the Episcopal Church, and notes that to many the Lutherans seem to be the least ecumenical-minded of our denominations. But this illustrates how this bold work can open avenues for serious discussion that will in the long run further Protestant unity; new ground is broken which can now be profitably tilled.—**Robert T. Handy**

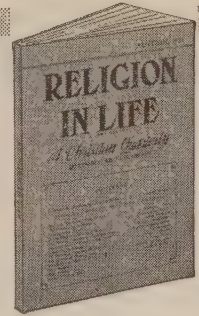
Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians

THE INTERPRETER'S BIBLE, VOL. X, ed. by George A. Buttrick, et al. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 621 pp., \$8.75

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The expositions are done, respectively, by John Short of St. George's United Church, Toronto; James Reid, formerly of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Eastbourne, Sussex, England; Oscar F. Blackwelder of the Lutheran Church of the Reformation, Washington; and Theodore O. Wedel, warden of the College of Preachers, Washington. Seldom does one get such a distinguished galaxy of theologians and preachers together in one place as is to be found in every volume of this series.

In general, the exegetical portions of the series are more valuable, one feels, than the expository sections. However, it is to be hoped that preachers will not expect to follow the expository sections too slavishly. If they are used as suggestive for one's own thinking in the development of sermons, they will have served a useful function.

One interesting fact about the preachers is that by and large they show a wholesome familiarity with the scholarly exegesis, and in the main follow a high theological line in their presentations. That is pleasing in a day when theological preaching is coming back into its rightful place in the church as a replacement of shallow psychology or mere ethical generalization.

There also is an existential note which certainly seems indicated as a necessity if we are to reach people in their actual situations. Consider Dr. Blackwelder's sentences in connection with Galatians 4:19—"Christ is available for all; he comes to each; and to every life that opens its door, he actually enters. His coming is so intimate, so personal, and so permanent that Paul could write about his being **formed in you.**"

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A pastor needs to buy it and use it again and again. The suggested bibliographies are the basis for a complete, systematic study of the scriptures, and many readers doubtless will be lured to go back to or to discover *de novo* the sources from which these scholars have derived their comprehensive knowledge.

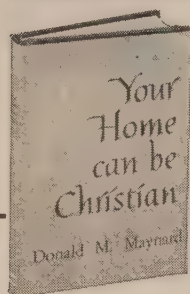
—Kendig Brubaker Cully

Homiletic Technique

HERE IS MY METHOD, ed. by Donald Macleod. Fleming H. Revell Co., 191 pp., \$2.50

Edited by the professor of Homiletics in Princeton Theological Seminary, this is a volume for preachers. Thirteen ministers in the United States, Canada, Scotland, and England have written briefly on their method of sermon preparation and have submitted one sermon each. As several of these preachers indicate, there is no one ideal system. The best method is the one that suits the individual preacher according to his

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training and personality. However, this book finds certain fundamental suggestions from a wide variety of great preachers.

1. Each preacher indicates, directly or indirectly, that the beginning of sermon construction is many weeks before the actual writing begins. The value of a notebook for notations on ideas and illustrations is stressed by most of them.

2. The importance of a clear, lucid outline seems to impress each of these preachers.

3. The large use of the Holy Scriptures is stressed.

4. A thorough acquaintance with the manuscript after it has been prepared seems to be of major importance. More than one indicates that he reads the manuscript over and over several times before Sunday morning.

5. The beginning and the ending of the sermon are of utmost importance. As Henry Sloane Coffin says, "Let me say again that I take great pains with the start and with the finish of a sermon. A text should of itself be arresting and given out arrestingly. The first sentence should also be one that grips interest. . . . If one is speaking without manuscript, he should prepare and have by heart the first two or three and the last two or three sentences."

6. Perhaps the most significant suggestion in the entire volume is one lifted up by Willard Brewing as he writes: "Furthermore, I might have preached a better sermon if I had been a better man. More than in any other calling of life, the product is part of the man. It is woven out of the delicate elements of his soul."

Several of these famous preachers have used over-wrought illustrations, such as the one in reference to Cyrus and Cagular in John A. Redhead's sermon. This, however, shows that effective illustrations can be used frequently.

It seems to me that the selection of preachers for such a volume on method could have been more representative. In the introduction the editor gave some explanation for the omission of certain names, but certainly there could have been an inclusion of a genuinely evangelistic note. Several of these sermons and the preachers here included whom I know are certainly evangelistic, but the volume does not lift up that needed emphasis.

Without disparaging the other contributors, the sermon which impressed me most was the one by Gerald Kennedy, entitled "Three Happy Trees." Here is an example of a striking outline and pointed sentences. His illustrations

represent a balance of personal experience and wide reading. The following words are sufficient to illustrate why I have chosen this sermon to be especially relevant: "Too often we are afraid to be first in anything. We are perfectly willing to follow along if someone else will lead, but for us to make the first move takes too much courage. I think this is the most serious criticism that can be used against the church and

against Christians. We have become so timid that we let the market place decide the issue. We are frightened to death to be the pioneers our fathers were, taking this Gospel of ours into new relationships."

Certainly this is a helpful volume for all preachers who want to become better skilled and more effective in the presentation of the gospel.—*Wilson O. Weldon*



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Curriculum Debate

THE BETTER CHURCH SCHOOL,
by John Leslie Lobingier. Pilgrim
Press, 152 pp., \$2.

This book portrays pretty clearly what, in my judgment, the church school should be trying to get away from. It is a good statement of the "life adjustment" or "experience centered" idea of the church school. It is proper to point out, however, that many feel this idea is completely dated and should be abandoned.

The two significant chapters of the book are chapter one, "What Are We Driving At?" and chapter three, "The Curriculum." I am in total disagreement with the point of view expressed in both. Both exhibit that aversion to knowledge, that fear of intellectual discipline, which is characteristic of progressive education at its worst.

In Lobingier's statement of what we are driving at there are eight objectives listed. Yes, you guessed it—the teaching of the Bible is listed as number eight, and one feels that it was lucky to squeeze in at all. "Religious knowl-

edge includes much more than the Bible," the author reminds his readers in the best manner of religious educators.

True enough, but what he and too many of his colleagues fail to recognize is that the church school does not even begin to do a fair job teaching the Bible. The Bible contains our basic statement of Christian faith and almost our sole record of that faith during its formative years. It is all very well to say that there is more to religion than the Bible but if you do not even teach the Bible, which is basic, how can you expect to teach the rest?

"We learn by doing," Lobingier points out. It seems to me that I have heard this before. I did not believe it when I heard it the first time and I do not believe it now. To be sure, we learn certain mechanical skills by doing, but that is just not the way our ideals and our convictions are born in us.

In chapter three Dr. Lobingier boldly espouses "the experience curriculum." He is concerned that the experience curriculum shall be composed of actual experiences that the pupils have. The only danger in this kind of curriculum, he thinks, is that the experiences it centers on shall be imaginary and not real. He never seems to raise the larger question which I now raise: as to whether even real experiences of the pupil are worth centering the curriculum on.

The child-centered curriculum inevitably represents a watering down of the convictions and beliefs of Christianity to a trivial level. This is not what the child needs or what he wants. What he needs and wants is to have his smallness stretched and challenged by the bigness of the gospel. It is the teacher's job not to bring Christianity down to the level of the child but, so to speak, to bring the child up to the level of Christianity. The primary object of concern is not the child—his whims, problems, feelings, tastes—but God and his intention for the child.

What progressive religious educators fail to see is that the Bible itself is a life-centered book, that Christianity itself is a life-centered religion. What they deal with are the great central issues confronting all men on this earth—such issues as sin, suffering, and death. When we teach the Bible as such we are not, therefore, apart from life. We are squarely in its stream. But it is not just life we are then in, it is life going somewhere—life consciously redeemed and directed, hallowed and enriched by the divine.

This book purports to be on *The*

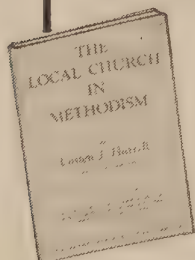
"If I were a pastor, I would find some way to put a copy of this book into the hands of each member of the official board and would do all I could to promote its study before the end of this conference year."

—Bishop Martin, *Texas Christian Advocate*

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Better Church School. But it is, in fact, a book on the same old church school that we have had for the past few decades. The book on the better church school remains to be written.—**C. Stanley Lowell**

What We Shall Preach

COMMUNION THROUGH PREACHING (The Monstrance of the Gospel), by **Henry Sloane Coffin**. Charles Scribner's Sons, 124 pp., \$2.50

In his preface to this little volume, Henry Sloan Coffin says: "It is the main point of these chapters to encourage sacramental sermons—sermons which enable God to have face to face Communion with His people." That is a noble purpose, and there is much in these four chapters that will inspire any minister to try to make his sermons serve this exalted purpose. The sermon should indeed be a part of a real worship experience every Sunday.

Having said that, however, I must be honest and say that I found myself in rather violent disagreement with an emphasis that runs throughout the book. On page 4, the author strikes the first of these false notes: "A talk on current events, or on some social evil, or on managing one's feelings, escaping one's worries, or overcoming fears, on 'integrating one's personality'—the whole range of social and psychological disquisition—is hardly the vehicle for the personal approach of Almighty God eliciting adoration, trust and love."

Why not? Did not Jesus tell us not to be overanxious about tomorrow? Did not his second commandment counsel us to love our brother as we love ourselves? Can you love a brother in a vacuum? Must you not delve into life situations if you are going to be practical about this brotherly love business?

Listen to James, the brother of Jesus: *My brothers, what is the good of a man's saying he has faith, if he has no good deeds to show? Can faith save him? If some brother or sister has no clothes and has not food enough for a day, and one of you says to them, "Goodbye, keep warm and have plenty to eat," without giving them the necessities of life, what good does it do? So faith by itself, if it has no good deeds to show, is dead* (Jas. 2:14-17 A.T.). How did James come by such ideas if he didn't get them from his brother Jesus? Yet, Dr. Coffin, on page 63, has the effrontery to say: "This is not a plea for exhortations to Christian duty. The Gospel is never a summons to hu-

man endeavor . . . There is no mon-
strance of the Gospel whatsoever in a
ringing call to do this or that, however
specifically set forth." These are such
amazing words that it makes one
wonder how long it has been since Dr.
Coffin has read his New Testament. In
Matthew 25 is the dramatic story of
the Great Assize in which the king tells
certain pious God-worshiping people to
depart because *in so far as you failed
to do it for one of these people who are
humblest, you failed to do it for me.*
Notice the words, *do it*—feeding, cloth-
ing, visiting the destitute!

Dr. Coffin has evidently been writing
for the Neo-Orthodox brethren and the
Barthians. They will like this book. But
for the rest of us who are trying to
serve God right down there where peo-
ple live and fear and worry and struggle
for peace of mind and harmony in all
human relations, we will do well to
pass this book by.

Speaking personally for a moment,
I have more than quadrupled the con-
gregation of my present church in
eleven years by preaching about the
very things Dr. Coffin says we are to
avoid. My study has become a thorough-
fare for troubled people seeking the
consolations of religion. They frequently
say: "I had never been interested in the
church until I learned, through your
ministry, what help there is for worried,
fearful, disintegrated, lost people like
me."—**L. L. Dunnington**

THE HOPE OF GLORY, by **John Seville Higgins**. Morehouse-Gorham Co., 146 pp., \$2.25

This is a series of meditations on the
prayer of General Thanksgiving in the
Book of Common Prayer. It is the
"Bishop of New York Book for 1953."

**SERMONS AND OUTLINES ON
THE SEVEN WORDS**, by **F. W. Robertson, James Stalker, Charles Simeon, and others**. Baker Book House, 107 pp., \$1.75

The fifth volume in the "Minister's
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**THE WORKS OF ST. PATRICK
AND ST. SECUNDINUS**, trans.
by **Ludwig Bieler**. Newman
Press, 121 pp., \$2.50

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BOOKS briefly noted

KNIGHT OF THE BURNING HEART, by *Leslie F. Church*. *Abingdon-Cokesbury Press*, 185 pp., \$1.75

Here the story of John Wesley is told especially for young people by a long-time leader in The Methodist Church of Great Britain. Since 1935 he has served as the connectional editor of the church.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, by *Walter Herbert Stowe*. *The Church Historical Society*, 64 pp., 25 cents.

Revised and enlarged, this booklet gives briefly a historical statement of the development of the Episcopal Church in America. Included is a selected book list for further reading.

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TOMORROW IS YOURS, by *Orva Lee Ice*. *Abingdon-Cokesbury Press*, 153 pp., \$2.

The author's purpose in these twenty talks is to help young persons. They are from addresses made by the author during the course of his ministry of thirty-five years.

BASIC METHODIST BELIEFS, by *O. B. Crockett*. Published by *O. B. Crockett*, 95 pp., \$1.00

This booklet is made up of articles written for the author's conference paper, *The Kentucky Methodist*. The chapters are interpretive statements following the pattern of the Articles of Religion of The Methodist Church. The writer says that it is false to assume that Methodists today are familiar with the doctrines of John Wesley, and many would agree with him.

ST. AUGUSTINE: SERMONS FOR CHRISTMAS AND EPIPHANY, trans. by *Thomas C. Lawler*. *Newman Press*, 249 pages, \$3.25

This is Volume 15 of the "Ancient Christian Writers Series," edited by J. Quasten and J. C. Plumpe. In addition to the sermons on Christmas and Epiphany themes by Augustine, the book contains an introduction discussing the Augustinian writings extant and the significance of Augustine's Christmas sermons in the rise of the Christmas observance in the Western church.

A DOCTOR'S SOLILOQUY, by *Joseph Hayyim Krinsky*. *Philosophical Library*, 116 pp., \$2.75

This is a scientist's confession of faith. He states that faith and shows how it, to a great extent, comes out of his work as a doctor. His belief in God is based upon the argument from design in the natural order to an Intelligent Spirit. This book is an example of the fact that God's revelation works in many different ways, and that it is always personal.

THE AMERICAN MARTYRS, by *John A. O'Brien*. *Appleton-Century-Crofts*, 310 pp., \$3.50

Father O'Brien, a professor at the University of Notre Dame, tells here with the official approval of his church the story of eight Jesuit missionaries who dedicated their lives to the missionary enterprise in North America in

the early seventeenth century. This is a fascinating account of Roman Catholics working with the Indians in the early development of this nation.

HISTORY OF SOUTH CAROLINA METHODISM, by *Albert Deems Bette*. *Advocate Press*, 544 pp., \$5.

Among the local histories of Methodism that have been appearing from time to time, this is one of the most detailed that we have seen. It is somewhat like a reference book of personalities of Methodism down through the years in South Carolina.

THE FUNERAL ENCYCLOPEDIA, ed. by *Charles L. Wallis*. *Harper & Brothers*, 327 pp., \$3.95

A source book for the pastor's use in connection with funerals, this volume includes typical services, funeral sermons classified according to various themes, poetry for use at funerals, prayers, and suggestions about "professional conduct."

AMERICA AND THE INTELLECTUALS, by *Newton Arvin, et al.* *Partisan Review*, 118 pp., \$1.

It seems that American intellectuals are now regarding their nation and its institutions in a new way. The trend is away from hostility to art and culture. At least this is the theme of the editors of this symposium in the "Partisan Review Series." Included are statements by Sidney Hook, Margaret Mead, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. For capsule statements of the beliefs of some of America's intellectuals, this is a handy volume.

NO WORK TODAY! THE PLIGHT OF AMERICA'S MIGRANTS, by *Varden Fuller*. *Public Affairs Pamphlet*, 28 pp., 25 cents.

Professor Fuller of the University of California gives here a fine statement of the problems involved with America's migratory laborers. "Migratory birds in flight are provided with rest havens at taxpayers' expense," he says; but, for the migrants he discusses, the charge is made that "such protection is scarcely real, for they are the great exception." Suggestions are made for solving the plight of America's migrants.

MY HOST THE WORLD, by *George Santayana*. *Charles Scribner's Sons*, 149 pp., \$3.

This book, volume three in the author's *Persons and Places*, brings to a close the autobiography of one of the most interesting of our contemporary philosophers.

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—John A. Mackay, in *God's Order*
(Macmillan Co., 1953)

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